United Nations A/68/118

General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 June 2013
English
Original: Arabic/English/Spanish

Sixty-eighth session
Item 99 (m) of the preliminary list*
General and complete disarmament

Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Replies received from Governments	2
	Cuba	2
	Lebanon	4
	Qatar	4

* A/68/50.

13-37797 (E) 100713 120713

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 4 of its resolution 67/37, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control", the General Assembly invited all Members States to communicate to the Secretary-General information on the measures they have adopted to promote the objectives envisaged in the resolution, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report containing that information to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

2. Pursuant to that request, on 25 February 2013, a note verbale was sent to Member States inviting them to provide information on the subject. The replies received thus far are contained in section II below. Additional replies received will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[30 April 2013]

Protecting the environment is a priority for Cuba. Cuba has solid legal norms for the protection of the environment and natural resources, which are applied strictly by the competent bodies.

Cuba ensures strict compliance with these norms in all aspects of public life, including in the drafting and implementation of disarmament and arms control treaties to which it is a State party, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Cuba has many instruments to ensure that the environment is protected when implementing disarmament and arms control treaties and agreements to which it is a party, including:

- Article 27 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, which contains the concept of sustainable development
- Act No. 81/1997 on the environment, which sets forth the principles underpinning Cuba's environmental policy
- Legislative Decree No. 207, entitled "On the use of nuclear energy", which establishes the general rules for such activities
- Decree No. 208, entitled "On the national accountability and control system for nuclear materials", which establishes the regulations for the operation of the system in question with the aim of contributing to the efficient management of such materials and detecting their unauthorized use, loss or movement
- The legal regime governing biosecurity and implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, which is reflected in Legislative Decree No. 190/99, entitled "Biological security", in resolution No. 2/2004 of the Ministry of

Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA), entitled "Regulation on accountability and control of biological materials, equipment and related technology", in the most recent update of the "List of biological agents that affect humans, animals and plants", and in the "Regulation granting authorizations in the field of biological security". The latter two are contained in CITMA resolutions Nos. 38/2006 and 180/2007, respectively

- Legislative Decree No. 202/1999, which regulates the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention at the national level
- Agreement No. 5517 of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers of 2005, entitled "On contraventions resulting from violation of the rules of the Chemical Weapons Convention", which rounded out the legislative measures needed to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Cuba reaffirms the importance of strict observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of disarmament and arms control agreements. In international disarmament forums, full account should be taken of the relevant environmental norms in the negotiation of international treaties and agreements on disarmament and arms control.

Our country has acquired extensive experience in adopting and implementing laws and policies that enable it to observe environmental norms; however, the existence of weapons of mass destruction, their ongoing development and possible use are among the most serious threats to international peace and security, to the fragile environmental balance on our planet and to sustainable development for all peoples without distinction.

Of the nearly 19,000 nuclear weapons currently in existence, it would take no more than about a hundred to usher in a nuclear winter that would in a short space of time cause the death of all human beings and destroy the earth's environment.

Cuba reiterates its call for negotiations on a treaty for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons to begin without further delay, within a specified time frame and under strict international control. An international treaty on nuclear disarmament must of necessity include measures for the protection of the environment.

The Chemical Weapons Convention continues to be the only international agreement that provides for the verifiable destruction of weapons of mass destruction and the facilities where they are produced, and that includes measures for the protection of humans and the environment.

Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention through a multilaterally negotiated, legally binding protocol is critical to the protection of the environment and the preservation of biodiversity on our planet.

The only effective solution that can prevent the dire consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction remains the total elimination of such weapons.

It is important to highlight the relevance and importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, ratified by Cuba on 10 April 1978, which remains fully in force.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[23 April 2013]

Lebanon possesses no weapons that have an impact on or are detrimental to the environment and supports the agreements on disarmament, arms control and the observance of environmental norms. It is, however, deeply concerned by Israel's possession and maintenance of a huge arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, which could be very harmful to the environment, even if they are not used.

Qatar

[Original: Arabic]
[21 May 2013]

The State of Qatar possesses only conventional weapons that are allowed under international standards, and only the minimum quantity needed for national defence in the light of the international and regional situation. The State of Qatar is working to improve the efficiency of weapons maintenance and training in order to prolong their use and obviate the need for additional weapons.

An environmental safety division has been established in the Qatari Armed Forces. It has been given responsibility for several environmental functions, including monitoring the application of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament, through the following measures:

(a) Putting in place environmental requirements and standards for the Armed Forces and monitoring their application;

(b) Participating in all committees for the formulation of military exercises and training in order to monitor the application of environmental standards before, during and after such exercises;

(c) Overseeing the disposal of ammunition in order to ensure the application of environmental standards and putting in place environmentally friendly procedures for that purpose;

(d) Overseeing all shooting activities carried out by military units.

United Nations A/68/119

General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 June 2013

Original: Arabic/English/French/
Spanish

Sixty-eighth session
Item 99 (o) of the preliminary list*
General and complete disarmament

Relationship between disarmament and development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/40. It discusses recent trends in the further strengthening within the United Nations of the relationship between disarmament and development. In addition, the report contains information received from Governments on the subject.

* A/68/50.

13-37817 (E) 090713 190713

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 67/40, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", the Assembly stressed the central role of the United Nations in the disarmament-development relationship and requested the Secretary-General to strengthen further the role of the Organization in this field. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to take action, through appropriate organs and within available resources, for the implementation of the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.[1] In paragraph 7 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. In addition, in paragraph 6 of the resolution, the General Assembly reiterated its invitation to Member States to provide the Secretary-General with information regarding measures and efforts to devote part of the resources made available by the implementation of disarmament and arms limitation agreements to economic and social development.

3. On 18 March 2013, the Secretariat sent a note verbale to Member States seeking their views. At the time of writing, replies had been received from the following Member States: Armenia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Iraq, Portugal, Qatar, and Spain. This information is contained in section III below.

II. Further strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the disarmament-development relationship

4. Progress in disarmament can create a conducive environment for development, and vice versa. In particular, an excessive accumulation of arms in a country can have a negative impact on its development. While arms in themselves may not be the root cause of violence and conflict, their spread and easy availability, and the increased likelihood of their diversion and misuse, can endanger stability and welfare as well as diminish investors' confidence and lead to social inequality.[2]

5. The 2012 outcome document of the Second United Nations Conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,[3] included a reference to development-related themes such as measurability and promoting sustainable development, and noted for the first time the value of assessing the effectiveness of international cooperation and assistance.

6. An important step towards better regulating international transfers of conventional arms was taken with the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in April 2013. In the Treaty, recognition is given to the social, economic and humanitarian consequences of the illicit and unregulated arms trade, and the challenges faced by

[1] See *Report of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, New York, 24 August-11 September 1987* (A/CONF.130/39).

[2] See A/64/228; A/64/153; A/65/132; A/66/168; A/67/186.

[3] A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4.

victims of armed conflict and their need for adequate care, rehabilitation and social and economic inclusion.

7. The legacy of armed conflict is prolonged underdevelopment and countries affected by armed conflict are less likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Discussions on the post-Millennium Development Goals provide an opportunity to recognize at the highest level that security, armed violence and development are interlinked and that there is a need to include a goal into the post-2015 development agenda targeting the reduction of violence. The need to include peace and security into the post-2015 development framework was emphasized in the report of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Agenda as one of the four key dimensions of development where progress is needed. Inclusion of a goal targeting reduction of violence will require sustained investment, not only in arms control, but also in support of law enforcement capacity-building, violence prevention strategies, local governance, citizen security, and a range of measures intended to improve the responsiveness and oversight of national justice and security sector institutions.

8. Within the United Nations, the main coordination mechanisms on issues that potentially bring together arms and development, remain the United Nations Mine Action Team, the Coordinating Action on Small Arms,[4] and the Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. These mechanisms ensure that the United Nations, in accordance with the action programme of the final document of the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, continues to promote an interrelated perspective within the overall objective of promoting international peace and security.

III. Information received from Governments

Armenia

[Original: English]
[8 May 2013]

As a developing country, the Republic of Armenia faces certain inherent difficulties in providing for sustainable socioeconomic development. At the meantime, Armenia is involved in the conflict with a neighbouring country, which is characterized by a wide-scale military build-up and permanent threats of use of force coming from the side of the adversary.

Under the above-mentioned conditions the Ministry of Defense of Armenia is prioritizing strict compliance with the existing arms control regime and implementation of limited disarmament programmes. In this regard we deem necessary the extension of assistance by the international community to such programmes.

Implementation of limited disarmament programmes has a positive impact on the socioeconomic situation of Armenia. Thus, in 2006, 872 tons of "mélange" rocket fuel were reprocessed into 5,000 tons of nitrogen fertilizers through the

[4] The Coordinating Action on Small Arms provides United Nations internal coordination on small arms, arms trade and ammunition issues.

assistance of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and donor countries. The fertilizers were provided to the farmers free of charge for the purpose of treating more than 1,300 hectares of arable land. The economic effect of the programme amounted to more than $2.5 million dollars.

Long-term demining programmes through the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme, the United States of America and Switzerland are being implemented on the territory of Armenia for the past 10 years. Some 200 hectares of arable land cleared of mines have been allocated to farmers. Much more vast territories were examined and the safety of movement was ensured.

Armenia has initiated a programme of dismantling and utilization of 111 pieces of tanks and armoured combat vehicles. An initial feasibility study has already been carried out by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). If implemented successfully, it will produce significant volume of scrap metal to be reprocessed for further use.

In crisis situations, such as landslides, man-made and natural disasters, the Armed Forces' capabilities are put to the service of the civilian population.

Burkina Faso

[Original: French]
[13 June 2013]

As is well known, violence and crime hamper productivity, economic growth and States' ability to meet their development goals.

For this reason, the relationship between disarmament and development has always been a subject of discussion within various organs of the United Nations. Moreover, the link between arms and human and economic resources is explicitly recognized in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. There is thus a fundamental link between disarmament and development at both the community and the individual levels. In fact, the consequences of the arms race undermine the development potential of the communities and individuals involved.

General Assembly resolution 67/40, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", reflects the international community's concerns regarding military expenditures and their impact on development. Although the Charter calls upon States to devote the least amount of the world's human and economic resources to the maintenance of international peace and security, military expenditures have been increasing steadily. In response, and bearing in mind the challenges for the international community in the fields of development, poverty eradication and the elimination of diseases that afflict humanity, the United Nations has adopted a series of resolutions promoting disarmament in order to respond more effectively to development needs, especially those of developing countries.

Disarmament and control of military expenditure are matters of great concern to the Government of Burkina Faso. Accordingly, it has established a security policy that reflects its economic realities. However, the Government is of the view that disarmament is a less pressing issue for developing countries that possess only the minimum of military resources necessary for their defence.

It is the developed countries that have the largest military budgets. Resources released from the implementation of disarmament measures could have a significant impact on the lives of thousands of people worldwide. This is why Burkina Faso advocates increased commitment to disarmament on the part of countries with the largest military arsenals.

Burundi

[Original: French]
[15 May 2013]

Introduction

Burundi is emerging gradually from its recurring crises of the past decade. Elections were held in a very positive and secure atmosphere, leading to the establishment of democratic institutions. The sociopolitical and security situation is now relatively favourable nationwide. The Burundian people are working to build peace, the source of sustainable development.

Despite some isolated incidents of armed violence, the Government has made security and development its major concerns, as reflected in two national development strategy papers: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II and Vision 2025.

A national action plan and a national strategy for the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons and civilian disarmament have been developed and adopted, in order to implement the Government's disarmament strategy.

A standing national commission for the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons has been established, and legislation governing small arms and light weapons in Burundi has been updated and aligned with the country's international commitments on the topic.

The legislation in question makes reference to punishments contained in the Penal Code for offences related to the illegal possession of small arms and light weapons, including prison sentences ranging from two to 10 years and/or fines ranging from 100,000 to 5,000,000 Burundi francs.

1. Relationship between disarmament and development

Non-proliferation in general and disarmament in particular are prerequisites for peace and sustainable development.

Aware that violence and crime are obstacles to productivity, economic growth and the ability of States to meet their development goals, the Government of Burundi has long developed a policy of voluntary civilian disarmament and reduction of the State's weapons stockpiles through the destruction of obsolete weapons and ammunition.

That policy took into account some of the public's concerns regarding living conditions in order to achieve its objectives.

Since the voluntary disarmament campaign, which began in 2009 and has resulted, thus far, in the removal from circulation of more than 3,400 rifles, 18,000 grenades and 350,000 cartridges, the Armed Violence Observatory has confirmed a

drop in armed violence of some 38 per cent. The resultant atmosphere of greater public calm has enabled people to attend to their daily development activities undisturbed.

What is more, as a social reinsertion measure, materials handed out as compensation for weapons turned in, consisting of 6,686 bags of cement, 12,667 pieces of sheet metal, 1,562 hoes, 284 bicycles, 2,370 pieces of loincloth, 169 cellular phones, 149 plastic chairs, 26,274 bars of soap, 3 television sets and 1 DVD player, have helped to raise beneficiaries' living standards.

2. Conclusion

Despite great strides made in the area of security, civilian firearm possession remains a security concern in Burundi. Isolated acts of violence are often committed using weapons.

An integrated security and development strategy has therefore been developed to control the crime rate. The goal is to effectively address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons by adopting a participatory and inclusive approach involving grassroots community associations, civil society, faith-based and youth organizations, etc. This strategy includes the mainstreaming of gender into programmes aimed at raising awareness of the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in general, and the surrender of illegal weapons in particular.

This approach is based on the idea that sustainable peace can be ensured only if people are willing to surrender their weapons and embrace peace and development. In that context, disarmament and reconciliation at the community level are considered preconditions for community development.

Communities that have demonstrated their commitment to peace through well-organized, effective disarmament activities will have access to community development microprojects.

Colombia

[Original: Spanish]
[11 April 2013]

It is a priority of Colombia's foreign and domestic policy to promote development. Accordingly, from a national standpoint and in its relations with the international community, Colombia is working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

As part of its democratic prosperity policy, the Government allocates considerable resources to meet the challenges set out in resolution 67/40, in the areas of development, poverty eradication and elimination of the diseases that afflict humanity.

In line with the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the relationship between disarmament and development in the current international context, Colombia advocates increasing awareness in the international community of the relationship between the two concepts, and adopting a broad range of measures to prevent conflicts, in particular, measures relating to illicit small arms and light weapons; the promotion of security through greater transparency and trust

among States; and a greater part to be played in so doing by the United Nations, other international institutions and the donor community.

As indicated in paragraph 14 of the Final Document of the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, the enhancement of security has not only military but also political, economic, social, humanitarian and human rights and ecological aspects. Colombia is therefore firmly convinced that disarmament and a reduction of illicit trade in all types of weapons, munitions and ordnance contributes to security and, thereby, to development.

In 2008, Colombia also endorsed the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, which was adopted on 7 June 2006. In so doing, it demonstrated its understanding that the relationship between armed violence and development cuts both ways, in that armed violence generates significant costs for the country and delays its development, while impediments to development and the situation of poverty and exclusion in turn foster armed violence. The Government and the people of Colombia have therefore undertaken with conviction the commitments of the international community to effectively address the prevention and reduction of armed violence and analyse the impact of those policies on the development goals of our societies.

In that regard, it is important to note that Colombia participates actively in the Core Group of the Geneva Declaration, where it has stressed the need to ensure that political commitments are reflected on the ground, through the establishment of cooperation mechanisms and a good-practices inventory, the sharing of experiences in prevention and reduction of armed violence, and the promotion of policies that foster development.

Iraq

[Original: Arabic]
[3 April 2013]

The Republic of Iraq affirms that the right to development is an inalienable human right and that equality of opportunity is a prerogative of both nations and their peoples. The Government of the Republic of Iraq is convinced that the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations regarding international cooperation can contribute to solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian nature and to strengthening the culture of peace and disarmament.

International peace and security are fundamental components in the realization of the right to development. In accordance with the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, we reaffirm that there is a close relationship between disarmament and development, and that progress in the former would help greatly in the realization of the latter. Resources released as a result of the implementation of disarmament measures should be devoted to the economic and social development and the well-being of all peoples, especially the peoples of developing countries.

We stress the need for a multilateral approach to issues relating to disarmament and development. The Republic of Iraq believes that the United

Nations and the competent international organizations have a vital role to play in that area.

Efforts must be made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by encouraging the international community to adopt and apply unilateral, bilateral and multilateral disarmament measures, which would inevitably contribute to the realization of those Goals. Reallocating some of the resources spent on armament and military forces to development would result in significant progress towards achieving the Goals.

The Republic of Iraq endorses the position that the resources of developing countries must not be spent on armament at a time when they are needed for social and economic development, as the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the prevalence of peace, democracy and non-interference in the internal affairs of States would all help to leverage resources for development.

Portugal

[Original: English]
[6 June 2013]

1. International instruments

Portugal is party to all the relevant disarmament conventions, such as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which establish the obligation of States parties to destroy their existing stockpile of landmines and cluster munitions, but also to conduct clearance activities in mined areas under their jurisdiction. In fact, the aforementioned weapons gravely hinder the economic and social development of affected communities by preventing access to farmland, pastures, and other vital resources.

As one of the coordinators for the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Portugal has been engaging, for the past two years, with all United Nations Member States in order to promote this landmark convention, which is still the sole multilateral instrument that aims at putting an end to the civilian suffering and casualties caused by cluster munitions.

Portugal regrets that the international community has thus far been unable to reach consensus on a protocol regarding mines other than anti-personnel landmines in the context of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. By blocking roads and general access to and from certain areas, mines other than anti-personnel landmines prevent effective humanitarian action on the ground. Furthermore, they may lead to the isolation of the population, hampering the development of State infrastructures in the affected region and thus undermining State authority.

2. Assistance

In 2012, Portugal continued its cooperation with Mozambique regarding landmine clearance and disposal, namely, by granting access to maps and relevant cartography, copies of which were made available to the authorities of Mozambique.

In this context, a delegation of Mozambique from the National Demining Institute visited the Portuguese Tropical Research Institute, a research and development public institution which has a vast cartographic archive (Overseas Historical Archive), as well as the Archives of the Ministry of National Defence.

Furthermore, in the past, Portugal has provided technical assistance in the field of mine detection and clearance, in the framework of IFOR (Bosnia) and KFOR (Kosovo) and training in demining activities in Guinea-Bissau, and between 2007 and 2010, Portugal has invested a total sum of €22.435 on anti-personnel mine-clearance projects in Angola and other developing countries.

Portugal can provide assistance upon request and depending on the availability of adequate funding. Portuguese Armed Forces experts are qualified in mine detection and clearance. The equipment used in mine detection and clearance includes electronic search means, explosive ordnance disposal/improvised explosive device disposal, operator suits, explosive ordnance disposal/improvised explosive device disposal X-ray (real time), dearmers, mechanical devices, handheld metal and multi-sensor systems.

3. National implementation

In 2009, Portugal adopted a "National strategy for security and development", which focuses on coherence and efficiency, and ensures better coordination of all the Portuguese programmes. The strategy also promotes a broader approach and reinforces the priority of human security as a major goal in Portugal's cooperation policy.

Qatar

[Original: English]
[14 May 2013]

The State of Qatar enjoys stability and a high level of security, as well as good relations with its neighbours. It does not get involved in regional disputes. It acceded to all the conventions on the prohibition of weapons. It only possesses traditional weapons to the extent that it is necessary for its security in the light of the situation in the region. Expenses on armaments represent a tiny part of its overall budget. The State of Qatar focuses on enhancing all that can serve the interest of its citizens, be it health, education or culture, as well as development projects to serve future generations. Moreover, great importance is attached to development and basic infrastructure projects.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[3 December 2012]

Spain recognizes fully the need to take effective measures linking disarmament and development, to ensure that these two elements, which share a common focus, are mutually reinforcing.

Suffering and casualties resulting from armed conflict affect civilians the most, inhibit economic development and reconstruction, and hamper access to prosperity in many parts of the world.

Spain has historically reaffirmed its firm commitment to disarmament and development, adopted legislative and operational measures, and promoted active disarmament and development policies in other geographical areas.

Domestically, Spain has one of the most advanced pieces of legislation in the field of disarmament, which exceeds the requirements established by international treaties and commitments binding Spain. It also has historically made a considerable effort to contain its military expenditures, which represent about 0.56 per cent of gross domestic product in the current year.

Internationally, Spain has been doing its utmost to help in an effective and coordinated manner to address the challenge of the critical issues of development and disarmament.

This approach is reflected clearly in Spain's position on cooperation with regard to non-proliferation and disarmament concerning weapons of mass destruction. Spain has ratified all treaties prohibiting or limiting the development, production, stockpiling, possession and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, or calling for the destruction of such weapons. It promotes the development of legislation on and the universalization of these treaties, and has made a commitment to provide assistance to States and international organizations responsible for their supervision and application.

With regard to the prohibition and total elimination of anti-personnel mines and other weapons with similar effects, Spain's attitude has always been to promote universalization of the Ottawa Convention of 1997, to which Spain is a party. Act No. 33/98, of 5 October, on the total prohibition of anti-personnel mines is the domestic legal instrument through which the obligations imposed on States under the Convention are incorporated into our legal system and given broad application and scope. Spain complies strictly with the provisions of the Convention and has adopted appropriate measures that totally prohibit all use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. On 3 October 2000, it completed the destruction of its mine stockpiles — with the exception of the 4,000 units which it had retained for experimentation in demining materials and techniques — leaving a current stockpile of 1,710 units. Along with other Governments, Spain also promotes the approval of United Nations resolutions urging all countries to adopt these types of measures.

With regard to cluster munitions, Spain participated in the entire negotiating process of the Convention on Cluster Munitions until its adoption in Dublin on 30 May 2008; signed the Convention on 3 December 2008 in Oslo; and deposited

the ratification instrument on 17 June. The Convention entered into force for Spain on 1 August 2010.

Spain was the tenth signatory country to ratify the Convention and, in March 2009, before the Convention entered into force, its armed forces destroyed their entire arsenal of cluster munitions, with the exception of those which, in accordance with article 3.6 of the Convention, may be retained for the development of and training in cluster munition detection, clearance or destruction techniques, or for the development of countermeasures. Currently, Spain's armed forces have 646 mortar rounds and 10 air-dropped bombs to that end.

Spain has also provided the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with a centre of excellence against improvised explosive devices, which has a multinational workforce of 58 (32 national and 26 international staff), and is a reference in the alliance against improvised explosive devices. In November 2010, the North Atlantic Council approved the centre's accreditation as a NATO centre of excellence and its start-up as an international military organization.

In the context of the European Union, Spain fully supports the European Union Joint Action of 28 November 1997 on anti-personnel mines, which covers actions in such places as Mozambique, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Central America and Angola. In this regard and strictly in line with its development assistance policy, Spain continues to promote humanitarian mine clearance efforts and multilateral actions needed to develop technologies for the location, disposal and destruction of mines currently deployed in other countries. It also continues to provide support and assistance for the training of expert officials in demining and victim assistance and physical and psychological recovery (awareness, education and rehabilitation of affected populations). Spain has contributed explosive ordnance disposal teams that have carried out demining work in sensitive areas as part of the KFOR,[5] SFOR,[6] Althea,[7] International Security Assistance Force and United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon deployments.

At the initiative of the Prime Minister, the International Demining Centre was established in 2002 with the aim of becoming the international reference in humanitarian demining. It offers various teaching and research capabilities in keeping with United Nations standards. During the period covered in the present report (2012), the Centre delivered a course for humanitarian demining instructors to staff from member countries of the Organization of American States, which was co-funded by the Defence Ministry of Spain and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. The Agency's funding was provided through the International and Latin American Foundation for Public Administration and Policies. This course is valued at close to 150,000 euros.

In short, all these actions reflect Spain's financial and technical support for existing programmes. Spain also contributes to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Demining.

The linkage between development and disarmament can also be seen in Spain's policy to control the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Spain fully implements the plan of action developed at the United Nations

[5] KFOR from 2009 without Spanish personnel.

[6] The SFOR command was replaced by that of the European Union's Operation Althea.

[7] From 2010 without Spanish units.

Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2001. Most of the plan's provisions have a lower level of requirement compared to the set of rules being applied by Spain currently. Spain is also bound by the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, adopted by the Council of the European Union in 1998, concerning the approval or rejection of exports of defence-related or dual-use materials.

To control the trade in arms, Spain has established a reliable system whereby the Inter-Ministerial Regulatory Board for External Trade in Defence-Related and Dual-Use Materials conducts compulsory and binding reviews of administrative authorizations relating to trade in defence-related and dual-use materials. To authorize these import and export operations, the Board takes into consideration the following instruments that ensure that exported weapons do not fall into the hands of countries or organizations that impede the free development of their people:

- European Union Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP defining common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment
- European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports
- Act No. 53/2007, of 28 December, on the control of foreign trade in defence-related and dual-use materials, further elaborated in Royal Decree No. RD 2061/2008.

With regard to its foreign operations, Spain devotes significant human and technical military resources to the development of disarmament, peacekeeping and assistance missions throughout the world. It supports and has participated in initiatives undertaken by the United Nations, NATO and the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Angola, Mozambique, Central America, Lebanon, the Gulf of Eden and Afghanistan. There are currently some 2,500 Spanish troops, security and police officers participating in peacebuilding, development and reconstruction missions in conflict-affected areas beyond Spanish borders.

Lastly, Spain reaffirms its determination to continue its efforts to ensure that disarmament and development are two of the pillars supporting a stronger international community and the stability and prosperity of its peoples. The central role of the United Nations and its competent organs in this regard should continue to be enhanced in pursuance of the overall goal of promoting international peace and security.

United Nations A/68/120

General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 June 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 118 of the preliminary list*
Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

The work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report highlights the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women since its establishment by the General Assembly through its resolution 64/289. The report covers progress made in the work of the Entity in its three mandated functional areas, the impact of that work and significant challenges that have been encountered and remain to be addressed in order to further strengthen the work of the Entity.

* A/68/50.

13-37837 (E) 170713

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as UN-Women, through its resolution 64/289 of 2 July 2010. The resolution consolidated and transferred to the Entity the mandates and functions of four former entities engaged in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women.[1] UN-Women is a composite entity, functioning as a secretariat and also carrying out operational activities at the country level, and with the additional role of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to review the work of UN-Women at its sixty-eighth session, and requested the Secretary-General to present to the Assembly at that session a comprehensive report in that regard.

3. Member States have regularly and systematically been informed about the progress of the Entity's work as well as on challenges in delivering on its mandate. In accordance with resolution 64/289, two reports were submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions, respectively (A/66/120 and A/67/201). Those reports provided updates on the implementation of the section of General Assembly resolution 64/289 entitled "Strengthening the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women", and covered general principles; governance of the Entity; administration and human resources; financing; and transitional arrangements.

4. Member States have also been apprised of the progress of the Entity in reports of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/2011/2, E/CN.6/2012/2 and E/CN.6/2013/2) and to the Executive Board of UN-Women, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/289. Progress made on the strategic plan of UN-Women for 2011-2013 has also been reported. In all of these, UN-Women provided a holistic picture and many details of its work, including achievements and challenges in its normative support, operational and coordination functions, and the results achieved through the integration of these functions.

5. The present report focuses on progress made in the work of the Entity in its three mandated functional areas, the impact of that work, and significant challenges that have been encountered and remain to be addressed in order to further strengthen the work of the Entity.

II. Progress achieved in the work of UN-Women

A. Overview

6. UN-Women is no longer in its transition or establishment phase. The Entity has successfully integrated the mandates of its four constituent entities. It has

[1] The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat; the United Nations Development Fund for Women; and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

strengthened its structures and staff capacities, including through staff alignment to ensure effective delivery. The strengthening of the regional architecture of the Entity is at an advanced stage. The Entity has fully and proactively assumed its new coordination function and has demonstrated leadership in the development, implementation and monitoring of a United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment. The work of UN-Women with its governing bodies — the Commission on the Status of Women and the Executive Board of UN-Women — has also matured, resulting in decisions and resolutions that advance the work of the Entity, as well as the global work on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Entity is thus clearly much stronger than it was at its establishment and much more robust than any of its constituent entities in the past.

B. Implementing the normative support mandate

7. From its establishment, UN-Women contributed significantly to strengthening the global normative and policy framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women. This contribution and value-added have progressively expanded and now include substantive and technical expertise, advocacy, awareness-raising, alliance-building and outreach to Member States and other stakeholders. Support is provided to gender-specific bodies and processes to reaffirm and strengthen existing gender equality norms and standards, highlight gaps in implementation and formulate policy recommendations, especially the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council on items pertaining to gender equality. UN-Women increasingly works to support sectoral areas and processes, including global conferences and their review and follow-up processes, in order to strengthen and amplify gender perspectives in these processes.

Commission on the Status of Women

8. UN-Women serves as the substantive secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women, which evaluates progress, identifies challenges, sets global standards and formulates concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide. In that capacity, the Entity supports all aspects of the work of the Commission, and has effectively contributed to the increased visibility and impact of the Commission. The Entity contributions to the work of the Commission help to support and enhance its highly visible role in the intergovernmental landscape as the principal global policymaking body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

9. Since assuming this responsibility in 2011, UN-Women has prepared important substantive inputs for the Commission annual sessions, providing analysis and evidence on the status of gender equality and recommendations for further action in regard to the priority themes and other thematic issues considered by the Commission. Building on its composite nature, UN-Women has brought richer operational experiences to bear on the content of reports, issues papers and other substantive documentation for the Commission. Beyond providing expertise and support to the Chair and Bureau, UN-Women increasingly focused on mobilization of all stakeholders to enhance commitment and strengthen outcomes. Interactive events and panel discussions organized by UN-Women provided opportunities for different stakeholders to share lessons learned in implementation of existing

commitments, and to identify steps and measures for further action. All of these efforts have enhanced deliberations of Member States, exchange of experience and good practice, and negotiations of outcomes.

10. UN-Women drew upon the lessons learned in supporting the Commission and other intergovernmental processes since 2011 to undertake year-long preparations for the fifty-seventh session of the Commission, which led to the historic and successful outcome and agreed conclusions on preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in March 2013. This comprehensive approach to preparations will constitute the regular modus operandi of the Entity going forward.

General Assembly

11. UN-Women has continued to support and contribute to the work of the General Assembly under its gender-specific items in the Second and Third Committees, including policy analysis and recommendations in reports of the Secretary-General, and by providing substantive and technical expertise. This has enabled Member States to strengthen commitments and further expand the normative frameworks to guide actions to promote gender equality and empower women, including those in rural areas and migrant workers. Support has also been provided for the work of the General Assembly on violence against women and girls, trafficking, ending female genital mutilation, and women in development. Resolutions that have emerged from deliberations on these issues have not only provided stronger foundations for interventions at the country level, but they have also given strong impetus to the work of the Entity in these areas.

12. General Assembly resolution 66/130, on women and political participation, exemplifies the informal processes increasingly used by the Entity to enhance intergovernmental outcomes. Inspired by a side event convened by UN-Women and other partners and a joint statement signed by 16 women in senior leadership positions, including several heads of State and Government, the resolution demonstrates the catalytic role that UN-Women can play in bringing needed attention to important gender equality issues.

13. UN-Women's analysis of the extent to which gender perspectives are reflected in the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees during the sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions has drawn attention to areas of the work of the Assembly that require stronger mainstreaming of a gender perspective (see A/66/211 and A/67/185). The findings from these reports became the basis for UN-Women to increase substantive and technical support on gender equality perspectives to Member States, enabling them to expand attention in resolutions such as those on trade and development, agricultural development, migration, sustainable development and disarmament.

14. Substantive contributions that UN-Women made to the General Assembly 2012 high-level debate on the rule of law helped to secure strong language and concrete commitments from Member States, including in the declaration adopted on the occasion. The importance of the outcomes of that debate cannot be overestimated as women's access to justice is recognized as a key determinant of the achievement of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment. Promoting the outcomes of that high-level debate remains central to the work that UN-Women does to promote gender equality and empower women.

Security Council

15. The quality and consistency of information in the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security, which UN-Women prepares on an annual basis in collaboration with relevant entities of the United Nations system, has been strengthened through reporting on specific indicators on the implementation of Council resolutions on this topic. The establishment of UN-Women provided new and strengthened previously existing opportunities to collaborate with partners in areas such as peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict, conflict-prevention and peacebuilding, and the rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies. This has produced better evidence and gender-specific recommendations in relevant reports of the Secretary-General, thus strengthening the basis for the Security Council's consideration and action. Briefings provided to the Council on an ad hoc basis by the head of the Entity since 2011 have also contributed to greater reflection of gender perspectives across the Council agenda. At the same time, the co-lead role of the Entity with the Peacebuilding Support Office in implementing the seven-point action plan of the Secretary-General on gender-responsive peacebuilding, and through its role in monitoring implementation of the system-wide strategic results framework on women and peace and security, has resulted in increased United Nations coherence.

Economic and Social Council

16. UN-Women has contributed significantly to supporting the Economic and Social Council in promoting and monitoring the progress of work on gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system. The substantive work of the Entity has provided the basis for annual resolutions on the topic whose negotiation receives close support by the Entity. The contributions of the Entity also resulted in strengthened attention to gender equality perspectives in the work of the Council during the annual ministerial reviews and development cooperation forums, as well as in its operational activities segments, where the Entity now regularly provides substantive and advocacy inputs. UN-Women made contributions to the preparations of the Economic and Social Council for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review that enabled Member States to adopt a resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which included considerable attention to gender perspectives. The contributions of UN-Women underscored the message that the work on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment was a common responsibility of the United Nations system and that the creation of UN-Women should not relieve other agencies of the mandate to deliver on gender equality and women's empowerment. Also underscored was the importance of accountability mechanisms, including the United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment as tools to hold agencies accountable and ensure gender mainstreaming in their work.

Engagement with sectoral intergovernmental processes

17. The strategic expansion of the Entity's engagement with sectoral intergovernmental processes to promote their incorporation of gender perspectives is a clear indication of the strength of the Entity and its value-added. This work is an integral component of the mandate of UN-Women, responds to expectations from stakeholders and goes well beyond efforts that were undertaken by the predecessor entities of UN-Women.

18. The engagement of UN-Women throughout the entire process surrounding the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012, exemplifies this value-added. UN-Women provided substantive, technical and advocacy inputs that contributed to ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment were recognized as key priorities as well as a cross-cutting issue in sustainable development in its three dimensions. The outcome document of the Conference reinforced the coordination mandate of the Entity in regard to sustainable development, and the Entity now contributes to a range of work streams on follow-up to the Conference.

19. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development[2] called for the establishment of an open working group and the elaboration of a proposal on sustainable development goals, coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015. Given the potential far-reaching and long-lasting impact of this undertaking on the global community's development direction, UN-Women is investing significant effort to provide substantive and technical expertise and advocacy inputs to ensure that the future development framework builds on the Millennium Development Goals, incorporates gender equality and women's empowerment in a comprehensive way, and accelerates the achievement of the goal of gender equality. Towards this end, UN-Women is advocating for a stand-alone gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment goal and for the full integration of aspects of gender equality in all other goals through gender-sensitive targets and indicators. The Entity is also providing the evidence and analysis that support this proposal, and serves as convenor for stakeholders to share views and insights thereon.

20. The work of UN-Women, in partnership with other actors, has supported the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change over the last two years, resulting in the recognition that gender equality and the active participation of women are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change. The decision of the eighteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on women's participation set a goal on gender balance in representation in bodies established under the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol and in the composition of parties' delegations, and requires annual reporting on progress made. UN-Women will provide support accordingly.

21. UN-Women played an active and catalytic role in a number of other intergovernmental processes that resulted in increased attention to gender perspectives and significant gains in outcomes. That was the case with regard to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,[3] adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Istanbul in 2011; the 2011 high-level meeting on AIDS; and the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Building on mandates from these outcomes, UN-Women has increased cooperation and collaboration with a range of stakeholders to further build evidence and knowledge, create spaces to give voice to women to share experiences and influence policymaking, and through targeted regional and country interventions.

---

[2] Resolution 66/288, annex.

[3] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. II.

22. UN-Women continued to be fully engaged in the further development of normative frameworks to advance women's human rights and supported implementation at the country level, coordinating this effort with, in particular, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Towards this end, the Entity provides technical support to and cooperates with human rights mechanisms, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in areas including the elaboration of general recommendations. At the same time, UN-Women offers capacity-building and training and convenes consultations for States parties, civil society and United Nations country teams on reporting under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[4] and follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee and on other aspects of women's human rights.

Knowledge hub, data and communications and outreach

23. Since its establishment, UN-Women has placed great emphasis on expanding its capacity to serve as a global knowledge hub with regard to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, through research, analysis and data and evidence gathering. It has also worked to harness experience acquired and lessons learned from its operational work. Building on functions of its predecessor entities, UN-Women has expanded the identification, the development and the dissemination of methodologies, tools and examples of good practice with a focus on the thematic priorities in its strategic plan. It is also increasing the availability of databases and other knowledge products and of communities of practice for the benefit of all stakeholders. This capacity is especially critical as it underpins three functions of the Entity and is the source for evidence-based analysis for intergovernmental discussions and decision-making; technical and advisory services to Member States, at their request; and good practice to support the coordination function.

24. UN-Women has continued and expanded initiatives that were in place at the time of its establishment, such as the Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls (http://www.endvawnow.org/), the Secretary-General's database on violence against women (http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-database.htm) and the knowledge portal on gender-responsive budgeting (www.gender-budgets.org), which facilitates knowledge sharing. New initiatives include the Knowledge Gateway for Women's Economic Empowerment, to be launched in September 2013 (www.empowerwomen.org), and the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality programme, which works with national statistical offices to improve evidence-based policymaking through greater availability of high-quality gender statistics (see E/CN.3/2013/10). A new searchable database of provisions relating to gender equality contained in constitutions across the world is under development and expected to be launched by September 2013 (http://constitutions.unwomen.org).

25. Given the importance of advocacy, influence and leverage to the work of UN-Women in its three main functions, communications have taken on an increasingly central role since the establishment of the Entity. By early 2013, UN-Women had achieved extensive global reach, positioning the Entity as the leading global voice on gender equality and women's empowerment. This was most clearly demonstrated on the occasion of International Women's Day and the fifty-seventh

[4] General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in 2013. As part of the UN-Women COMMIT initiative, 57 Governments pledged concrete new actions to end violence against women. UN-Women monitored media coverage about the Commission in more than 50 countries through leading international media outlets, and the Entity's media partnerships resulted in strengthened coverage of its work and gender equality issues. Consistent growth also occurred on UN-Women's social media channels, with audiences doubling from 189,000 followers on 1 January 2012 to 371,000 at the end of 2012, and an eightfold increase from 2010. Following an initial effort in 2011 and its expansion in 2012, social media were fully integrated into the work of the Commission in 2013, reaching 28 million unique users in March 2013. Content on the corporate website of the Entity grew by 140 per cent during 2012. The successful global advocacy initiative of the Entity "Say NO — UNiTE to End Violence against Women", has recorded since its inception over 5.5 million actions and close to 900 civil society partners.

C. Responding to the coordination mandate

26. Upon the establishment of UN-Women, the General Assembly singled out as an additional role for the Entity the task of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, including on gender mainstreaming. UN-Women has risen to this mandate and built up this function systematically, especially by working through inter-agency forums at the global, regional and national levels.

27. The Entity assumed its global-level leadership role in United Nations system coordination with its membership, as of the fourth quarter of 2010, in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the High-level Committee on Programmes, and the High-level Committee on Management, and as the Chair of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. From the outset, UN-Women ensured that a gender perspective was integrated into system-wide policy decisions and recommendations. This is evident, for example, in the strong gender equality components in the statement made by CEB to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries of 2011 and in the proposed recommendations and outcomes provided as an input to the high-level dialogue on international migration and development of the General Assembly of September 2013. It is also evident in the system-wide action plan for youth, adopted in 2013, where UN-Women is now working in partnership with other entities on implementation, including the development of comprehensive and evidence-based employment and livelihoods programmes targeting disadvantaged young men and women. Based on the substantive and technical expertise and inputs of the Entity, the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, also of 2013, incorporates gender perspectives.

28. At present, UN-Women chairs or co-chairs 15 global coordination mechanisms or processes on issues ranging from the Millennium Development Goal Task Force to the United Nations Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality, and is a member of approximately 100 other coordination processes at any given time.

29. Notably in 2012, UN-Women exercised its coordination mandate to lead the development of the first United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment, for greater accountability, and supported its roll-out

across the system through a help desk and workshops. United Nations entities are reporting on their performance against the indicators of the action plan, with UN-Women compiling and analysing the reports of entities and supporting them in both reporting and remedying gaps and deficiencies. With the first round of reporting completed in 2013, the results provide the initial baseline for the system's performance on gender mainstreaming at the corporate level. Fifty-five entities reported, constituting 82 per cent of those required to do so. UN-Women included a summary of the results in a report to the Economic and Social Council in July 2013.

30. The United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment has already resulted in significant and immediate shifts in the manner in which the United Nations system approaches work related to gender equality and women's empowerment, and gender mainstreaming. Clear and agreed upon standards for mainstreaming gender perspectives have been established across the system, thus increasing coherence, coordination and knowledge management; a harmonized reporting system has been developed to identify strengths and weaknesses related to work on gender equality and the empowerment of women both within individual entities and across the United Nations system; and decentralization of responsibility and revitalization of work on gender equality and the empowerment of women across the United Nations system have been realized. At the same time, targeted action continues to be needed, if the United Nations system as a whole is to meet or exceed, by 2017, requirements in all performance indicators of the action plan. UN-Women will offer support and technical assistance to help reach this goal.

31. Also at the global level, UN-Women worked to revitalize the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. Within the Network, as well as the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, UN-Women placed special emphasis on ensuring that the United Nations system provided coordinated inputs and support to key intergovernmental processes, such as the process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, the post-2015 agenda discussions, and the consultations on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities. This leadership strengthened the capacity of the United Nations system to speak with "one voice" on gender equality issues and delivered substantive inputs and advocacy platforms and mobilization of stakeholders. A further example of enhanced coordination is a statement on ending violence against women, signed by 11 agency heads in March 2013, which provides a strong basis for collaborative action in support of the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women. The Entity's inventory of United Nations system activities to prevent and eliminate violence against women also contributes to better coordination across the system.

32. At its establishment, UN-Women assumed the leadership and coordination of the campaign of the Secretary-General, "UNiTE to End Violence against Women", which implements strategies and activities at the global, regional and national levels, in close collaboration with the Campaign working group. The UNiTE Campaign has been instrumental in consolidating in a number of United Nations country teams a shared and coherent approach to efforts to end violence against women and girls.

33. At the national level, one of the highest priorities of UN-Women is to ensure the capacity of United Nations country teams and the Resident Coordinator system

to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Entity has expanded its efforts to lead and/or support United Nations country teams in mainstreaming gender equality perspectives into programme planning and implementation. UN-Women offices in all eight "Delivering as one" pilot countries have invested particular efforts to ensure coordinated support and advocacy for gender equality and women's empowerment by the United Nations system, including through substantive inputs and technical advice. Overall, UN-Women now leads or co-leads 62 out of 113 gender theme groups at the national level.

34. Analysis of annual reports of the Resident Coordinator identified joint initiatives on gender equality in 115 United Nations country teams, up from 43 in 2004; 62 United Nations country teams helped Governments to integrate gender equality into national strategy documents, up from 17 in 2004. United Nations country teams also supported improvements in national laws and policies on gender equality in 73 countries, up from 11 in 2004. The number of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks that include gender equality as a cross-cutting issue has increased from 41 in 2004 to 58 in 2012. This evidence of growing United Nations system coordination provides the impetus for an even more concerted effort by UN-Women.

35. UN-Women is enhancing its participation in joint programmes with partner agencies at the country level. The Entity is currently active in 104 such programmes that cover areas including ending violence against women, strengthening gender perspectives in national planning, women's economic empowerment, and conflict prevention and social cohesion. UN-Women also promotes the use of the United Nations country teams performance indicators for gender equality and women's empowerment for common country planning processes, which have recently been completed in four countries (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Kenya, Maldives and Rwanda), bringing the total number of United Nations country teams that have completed these scorecards to 28 since they started to be used in 2008.

D. Implementing the operational activities mandate

36. The General Assembly established UN-Women with a mandate to assist countries and the United Nations system to progress more effectively and efficiently towards the goal of achieving gender equality, women's empowerment and upholding women's rights. From the outset, and as elaborated in its first strategic plan, for the period 2011-2013, UN-Women has closely linked its normative support and coordination function, and operational activities providing on-the-ground support for national development effort. The coordination function and operations of UN-Women at the country level support implementation of international and regional norms and standards, while also informing the development of those norms and standards with country-level realities through advocacy, policy, knowledge and strategic partnerships.

37. A key component of the effort of the Entity to strengthen its capacity to deliver results for women and girls at the national level has been the improvement of effectiveness and efficiency through decentralization. This required adaptation of inherited structures to respond to changes in operating environments, such as increased regional initiatives, greater South-South cooperation and marked increases in national capacity in many countries. To achieve these improvements and changes,

UN-Women consolidated and strengthened capacities at the regional level and devolved certain oversight functions from headquarters to the regional level.

38. The new regional architecture of UN-Women, approved by its Executive Board in November 2011, has since resulted in the consolidation and expansion of its regional and country presences, which empowers senior leaders in the field to make strategic decisions that are responsive to national and regional priorities and ensure effective cooperation with the United Nations system. While at the end of 2011 UN-Women had 17 offices with full representation, by the end of 2012 this presence had grown to 54 such representations, consisting of 48 country and 6 multi-country offices. Of the 48 country offices, 19 are located in Africa, 4 in Arab States, 9 in the Asia and Pacific region, 6 in Europe and Central Asia and 10 in the Americas and Caribbean.

39. Multi-country offices are located in Barbados, Fiji, India, Kazakhstan, Morocco and South Africa. The use of multi-country offices responds to increased requests for UN-Women support, while recognizing that UN-Women does not have the capacity or resources to open country offices in every country requesting support.

40. Of the planned six regional offices, five have been set up with varying levels of staffing completed by June 2013 (Egypt, Kenya, Panama, Senegal and Thailand), located in the United Nations common regional hubs. While the six regional offices have the capacity to perform day-to-day programmatic oversight and technical advisory and operational support functions for the country offices, global oversight, strategic orientation and advisory functions are located at UN-Women headquarters level.

41. The six priorities of the 2011-2013 strategic plan guide the programmatic work of UN-Women. These are:

(a) Women lead and participate in decision-making at all levels;

(b) Women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development;

(c) Women and girls live a life free from violence;

(d) Peace and security and humanitarian action are shaped by women's leadership and participation;

(e) Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities;

(f) A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment is in place and is applied through action by Governments and other stakeholders at all levels.

42. As at the end of 2012, UN-Women had delivered support in 87 programme countries, and was on track against 23 of 29 strategic plan indicators. For example, 17 countries had incorporated temporary special measures for women in constitutions, legal frameworks and policies; 11 countries saw political parties field more women candidates in national elections; 27 countries had adopted or strengthened policies to protect the most economically vulnerable groups of women; 22 countries had adopted national action plans to end violence against women and girls; 18 countries had developed national action plans to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); and 9 countries had measures in place to detect and

prevent sexual violence in conflict. National planning documents in 28 countries incorporated priorities and budgets on gender equality and women's empowerment; and 20 countries had in place systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment. In 10 countries supported by UN-Women, women living with HIV were able to influence formal planning and review mechanisms for the national response to HIV.

43. The operational work of UN-Women is demand-driven and responds to requests for support from Member States and other stakeholders, reaffirming the centrality of national ownership. Within this overall context, UN-Women supports capacity development as the foundation strategy for effective and sustainable development. The Entity provides substantive expertise and technical advice on the thematic priorities covered in its strategic plan, and in accordance with government requests. It serves as convenor of stakeholders and provides spaces for women to make their voices heard and influence national development processes. It advocates for and helps build alliances for the realization of equality for women and girls at country level.

E. Expanding partnerships

44. From its establishment UN-Women has placed a premium on working in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, at different levels, including civil society and the United Nations system in an effort to help accelerate progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. The Entity built on, and consolidated and expanded, the existing practice of close consultation with civil society organizations.

45. Over the last 30 months, the Entity has institutionalized its relationship with civil society with the establishment of a global civil society advisory group in 2012, which today includes 30 groups at the regional and national levels. They constitute a mechanism for regular dialogue on policy, programming, normative and intergovernmental activities, and help accelerate their implementation. They are also channels for UN-Women to help amplify the voices of civil society, including women at the grass-roots level, in policy- and decision-making forums. Facilitation by UN-Women of the participation of a steadily increasing number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women has also expanded opportunities for their interaction with Member States and their effective contribution to the sessions.

46. UN-Women's successful partnership-building efforts are also evident in its membership in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), which UN-Women has joined as its eleventh co-sponsor, and its participation in the H4+ group, whose members serve as the lead technical partners for the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. These have enabled UN-Women to provide substantial contributions to form a gender equality perspective and to act as a catalyst for gender mainstreaming. In this regard, the Entity has brought added value to the Education First Initiative and Sustainable Energy for All by highlighting gender perspectives and advocating for attention to gender equality considerations. It has engaged in thematic areas such as

the World Water Week, the World Urban Forum and forums dealing with information and communications technology.

47. UN-Women signed new memorandums of understanding with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), increasing its linkages across the United Nations system. UN-Habitat created an advisory group on gender issues, in which UN-Women actively participates to support mainstreaming gender perspectives into the urban development agenda. These partnerships have also been instrumental in expanding joint programmes, such as the Safe and Sustainable Cities for All programme, a joint programme with UN-Habitat and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) aimed at ensuring that public spaces are safe and free from violence against women and girls. Through its co-leadership of the global working group on migration, human rights and gender, UN-Women ensures that the linkages between migration and development are addressed in practical and action-oriented ways and from a gender perspective. The group's support for, and interaction with, the Global Forum on Migration and Development is contributing to strengthened attention to gender perspectives in migration.

48. In an effort to accelerate progress towards the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment, UN-Women fostered partnerships with many other stakeholders, including academic institutions, the media and the business community, and is working with corporations and foundations to diversify its funding base. In 2012 UN-Women received over $5,200,000 from private sector partners and foundations, including Coca-Cola Company, Microsoft, Zonta International, Rockefeller Foundation, Women's Self Worth Foundation and Loomba Foundation. This is an increase of 460 per cent above private sector funds raised in 2010. UN-Women is also working with the International Olympic Committee at the global and national levels to support women leadership initiatives.

49. UN-Women benefits from the activities of 18 national committees, which gradually increased their awareness-raising, outreach and fundraising activities in support of UN-Women, also owing to the capacity development efforts that the Entity extended to them. International Women's Day celebrations and priority themes of the Commission on the Status of Women have proven to be particularly effective entry points for their work. Overall, national committees contributed $1,241,388 in 2012, up from $823,000 in 2011, while also advocating for increased government contributions.

50. In 2012, 292 Chief Executive Officers of companies in 17 countries signed the Chief Executive Officers' Statement of Support for the UN-Women/United Nations Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles, bringing the total number of signatures to 534. This set of principles for business offer guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. In order to enhance their impact, the Global Compact and UN-Women have issued guidance to support companies' implementation efforts and encourage greater transparency and accountability. A dedicated website features key tools, resources and guidance materials and serves as a platform for knowledge sharing and exchange of good practices (http://weprinciples.unglobalcompact.org/Site/ToolsAndReportingWepMaterials/).

F. Management and administration

51. From the very outset, UN-Women focused on quickly building an effective and efficient institution, especially with regard to its strategic orientation, organizational structure and management of its financial and human resources. It has also put in place its evaluation and audit functions.

52. The Entity's first strategic plan 2011-2013 set out in June 2011 a vision, mission and six priorities of the operational response of the Entity, emphasizing the commitment to make a difference in the daily lives of women and girls. An update of the strategic plan for the period 2014-2017 is in the process of being finalized. With the endorsement by the Executive Board of the Entity of the regional architecture, the institutional structure of the Entity for the delivery of its three main functions was completed.

53. UN-Women adopted the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) as at 1 January 2012, supported by the approval by the Executive Board of amendments to the financial regulations. In line with actions taken by other executive boards, in early February 2013 the Executive Board of UN-Women decided on a road map towards an integrated budget, beginning in 2014, and an update on cost recovery, approving harmonized methodology for calculating cost-recovery rates. UN-Women will apply these as at 1 January 2014.

54. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, as at 1 January 2011, was given delegated authority in matters pertaining to human resources management (see ST/SGB/2011/2). The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director has since exercised this authority in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, including the appointment of staff members of UN-Women through the issuance of letters of appointment. The Entity undertook two alignment processes, first to consolidate the four former United Nations entities into UN-Women at Headquarters, and second to implement its regional architecture. These processes have resulted in a coherent workforce at Headquarters and in the field.

55. Since June 2011, steps have been taken towards securing adequate staff representation for UN-Women through a transparent and participatory process. A referendum was conducted in January 2013 on options for a UN-Women staff representation; over 60 per cent of respondents expressed support for joining the Staff Council of UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); almost 25 per cent supported the creation of an independent UN-Women staff association; and 13 per cent opted for joining the United Nations Staff Union. The Staff Council welcomed the outcome of the voting process, and subsequently became the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN-Women Staff Council.

56. UN-Women has taken steps to establish a credible, useful and independent evaluation function, which is encapsulated in the evaluation policy approved by the Executive Board in 2012. The evaluation function strengthens the Entity work and results-based management by contributing to organizational transparency, learning and accountability, and supporting the Entity in its efforts to produce better results for women with timely and strategic information on the performance of UN-Women policies, programmes and initiatives. Two corporate thematic evaluations are ongoing, on violence against women, and on women and peace and security, respectively. The UN-Women evaluation office is also leading the joint evaluation

of joint gender equality programmes, a collaborative effort with UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, the Millennium Development Goal Fund, and the Governments of Spain and Norway.

57. Steps have been taken to increase the UN-Women management response to, and utilization of, evaluations since 2011. The global accountability and tracking of evaluation use system ensures that knowledge gained from evaluations becomes an integral part of the UN-Women organizational learning process. UN-Women created the gender equality evaluation portal as a tool to strengthen and promote the exchange of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. The Entity has also established partnerships with regional evaluation networks in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to promote national and regional evaluation capacity development and deliver professional trainings on integrating gender equality dimensions into evaluation.

58. Audits of UN-Women activities are carried out by both external and internal auditors. The United Nations Board of Auditors carried out the external audit of the accounts of UN-Women for 2011 and issued its report (A/67/5/Add.13 and Corr.1). The 2012 external audit of the performance and financial position of UN-Women as reported under IPSAS was completed at the end of May 2013. Following Rule 2302 of its financial regulations and rules, the internal audit function of the Entity is performed under a service-level agreement by the Office of Audit and Investigations of UNDP. In accordance with decision 2012/10 of the Executive Board of UN-Women, all internal audit reports issued after 1 December 2012 are made publicly available. The first such internal audit report, for UN-Women Afghanistan, was made available in this manner in May 2013. In October 2012 UN-Women created a five-member audit advisory committee to advise the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women in fulfilling her responsibilities regarding oversight, financial management and reporting, internal audit and investigation, external audit, risk management and systems of internal control and accountability. The audit advisory committee will present its first annual report and findings to the Executive Board in September 2013.

59. As the Entity is expanding its global footprint through the regional architecture, decentralized decision-making is required. In order to strengthen accountability and transparency of operations, UN-Women launched its new internal control and delegation of authority frameworks in November 2012. These frameworks set out the level of assigned authority for decision-making throughout the Entity and contribute to the effective and efficient management of organizational risks. At the same time, the Entity launched its anti-fraud hotline to allow vendors, contractors, staff and members of the public to report any wrongdoing through the United Nations Ethics Office/UNDP Office of Audit and Investigation reporting mechanisms. To further enhance transparency and accountability for the use of donor funds, UN-Women became a signatory to the International Aid Transparency Initiative in May 2012 and has published its first phase of programme/project data.

III. Challenges and constraints

60. UN-Women has achieved considerable success in its work and is well positioned to achieve even more. However, it has also encountered some of the constraints and challenges expected of a new entity with a new mandate, including that of system-

wide coordination. Many of these challenges have been successfully addressed, but some continue to receive attention in order to ensure that the entity matures and remains fully responsive to the vision with which it was established.

61. For example, while UN-Women is steadily working towards strengthening the linkages between the normative and operational work it supports, an implementation gap persists. With its growing capacity on the ground, UN-Women is increasingly able to provide support to Member States to implement changes that improve the daily realities of women and girls at the national level. However, closing the implementation gap and turning commitments into action requires intensified and concerted action not only by UN-Women, but by all stakeholders, especially Member States.

62. The experience of UN-Women in leading the successful roll-out of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and its monitoring clearly indicate that the Entity's additional mandate of leading, coordinating and ensuring the accountability of the United Nations system for its work on gender equality requires substantial investment. The development of appropriate, comprehensive and effective modalities for the coordination work at headquarters and field levels is undoubtedly on course, but it will need more time to mature. This is particularly so given that there are multiple agencies, inter-agency networks and coordination mechanisms at the global, country and regional levels requiring considerable capacity and investment from UN-Women.

Availability of resources

63. Achieving an adequate resource base to support the work of the Entity has been the greatest challenge UN-Women has experienced so far. In a difficult financial climate and with continued structural underfunding of the gender equality architecture and the low starting resource baselines, this is likely to remain the biggest challenge for UN-Women in the years to come.

64. Overall, in 2012, 33 Member States provided an increased core contribution, with a third of pledges being multi-year. There were increases in core contributions from 6 of the UN-Women top 10 donors, namely Australia, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America. The donor base also broadened, reaching 113 in 2012. Switzerland and Germany also became new donors for the Fund for Gender Equality.

65. However, these gains could not compensate for the almost $28 million decrease in core resources from some of the Entity's key donors. As a result of this shortfall, the ambitious funding goals set out by the Secretary-General in 2009, which envisaged a resources portfolio in the range of $500 million annually, are not yet within reach.

66. Targets for 2011 to 2013 were reduced from the initial expectations of $500 million annually to a total of $700 million for the biennium 2012-2013. Yet, even these lower targets were missed by significant amounts. This was despite efforts and successes in expanding partnerships and the non-traditional donor base. The number of donors increased, and there was modest success in leveraging funding from and establishing new partnerships with the private sector and foundations. As a result, for 2012, there was an overall revenue shortfall for the year of $92.2 million — a 9 per cent drop from 2011.

67. Given the mandate of UN-Women, its high dependence on voluntary contributions from Governments, and the demands from stakeholders for the delivery of measurable results, the expectations and commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women need to be matched by resources. Without this, the resources afforded UN-Women will not be compatible with carrying out its mandate.

68. The urgency of meeting UN-Women funding goals at this time also derives from the United Nations system Millennium Development Goals 1,000 Days of Action drive, where targets directly related to the well-being of women lag behind many of the others. The decision of Member States at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women to undertake a 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[5] demonstrates renewed political impetus and momentum for action to achieve the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women. As part of the 20-year review, stakeholders are called upon to assess progress made, highlight gaps and current challenges and take concrete steps for stronger implementation. This process will also be critical for strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda. UN-Women will lead preparatory processes at all levels, through its normative support and coordination work, and especially by offering assistance and support at the national level. The scope and impact of these efforts will also depend on the level of available resources.

69. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/289, resources required by UN-Women to service the normative intergovernmental processes are funded from the regular budget and approved by the General Assembly. Resources required to service the operational intergovernmental processes and operational activities at all levels are funded from voluntary contributions and approved by the Executive Board.

70. In preparing its biennial programme budget, UN-Women complies with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8). Pursuant to the approval by the General Assembly of the use of a grant arrangement pertaining to the regular budget portion of UN-Women, this modality has been successfully implemented since 2011. At present, 47 posts are funded from the regular budget.

IV. Conclusions

71. After three years of operation, UN-Women is a strengthened organization in its structures, capacities and experience of how to achieve its mandate. The results achieved since it became operational on 1 January 2011 confirm that the decision to establish the Entity was sound, and has significantly and successfully strengthened the gender equality architecture of the United Nations.

72. The relevance and added value of the mandate of UN-Women as a composite entity that integrates normative support and coordination functions with operational activities has been amply demonstrated. UN-Women consistently provides leadership and a strong voice for women and girls at all levels. It provides effective

[5] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

substantive and technical expertise and advocacy support to enhance the normative and policy environment. Assistance and initiatives of the Entity at the national level, with a range of stakeholders, make a difference in the daily lives of women and girls. The effective consultation of the Entity with civil society organizations amplifies their role and contributions, and its leadership of the United Nations system ensures that the system as a whole now takes responsibility for achieving the goal of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment. The mandate of UN-Women is universal, recognizing that no country has achieved gender equality.

73. At a time of universal commitment by Member States to achieving gender equality and women's rights and empowerment, but also of a climate of continued financial constraints and long-standing challenges and new and emerging crises in all parts of the world, it is critical that all stakeholders continue to solidify progress made and accelerate action and investment to effectively overcome gaps that perpetuate inequality and discrimination against women and girls.

74. Two key opportunities lie ahead in this regard. First, the development of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build on the lessons of the Millennium Development Goals by retaining the priority and the focus given to gender equality through a stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment, while at the same time ensuring that gender equality is comprehensively integrated into all goals, targets and indicators that may be developed in the new framework. Second, the 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action provides renewed impetus and momentum to accelerate achievement of the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

75. Going forward, UN-Women will seize these and all other opportunities to be a leading voice and advocate for gender equality, and to make a lasting difference for women and girls everywhere.

United Nations A/68/121

General Assembly

Distr.: General
1 July 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 28 of the preliminary list*
Advancement of women

Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 66/131 on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixty-eighth session a report on the status of the Convention and the implementation of the resolution. It covers the period from 2 July 2011 to 1 July 2013.

* A/68/50.

13-38212 (E) 170713

Please recycle

I. Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180. It was opened for signature, subject to ratification and for accession at United Nations Headquarters on 1 March 1980 and, in accordance with article 27 of the Convention, entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. As at 1 July 2013, 187 States had ratified, acceded to or succeeded to the Convention, which reflects no change since the previous report (A/66/99). The list of States parties to the Convention and the dates of deposit of their instruments of ratification, accession or succession to the Convention are available from the website of the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs (http://treaties.un.org), along with all declarations, reservations, objections and other relevant information.

3. As at 1 July 2013, 68 States parties had deposited with the Secretary-General instruments of acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which relates to the meeting time of the Committee. The five countries accepting the amendment since the submission of the previous report were Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Greece and the Republic of Moldova. The list of States that have accepted the amendment to article 20 of the Convention and the dates of deposit of their instruments of acceptance are available on the website of the Treaty Section.

4. During the reporting period, no objections to reservations were received, and Thailand withdrew its reservation to article 16 (C.N.381.2012). The above depositary notification is available from the website of the Office of Legal Affairs for reference.

II. Status of the Optional Protocol to the Convention

5. By its resolution 54/4, the General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Optional Protocol was opened for signature, subject to ratification and accession at United Nations Headquarters on 10 December 1999 and, in accordance with article 16, paragraph 1, entered into force on 22 December 2000.

6. As at 1 July 2013, 104 States parties had ratified, acceded to or succeeded to the Optional Protocol. This represents an increase of two States parties since the submission of the previous report. Those two States parties are: Cape Verde, on 10 October 2011; and Côte d'Ivoire, on 20 January 2012. The list of States parties to the Optional Protocol, the dates of deposit of their instruments of ratification, accession or succession, and all declarations, reservations and other relevant information are also available from the website of the Treaty Section.

III. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

A. Substantive and technical servicing

7. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has responsibility for supporting the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Committee is serviced by the secretariat of the Committee, which comprises the Secretary (P-4), four Human Rights Officers (P-3), one Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and one Assistant (General Service).

8. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has ensured that the strong links between the Committee and the intergovernmental machinery responsible for the promotion of gender equality continue to be maintained. The Chair of the Committee participated in the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, in 2012 and 2013. The Chair also addressed the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions. The Committee's interaction with the United Nations human rights machinery is extremely important for its overall activities, and the Committee benefits greatly from the cooperation of the relevant stakeholders to effectively discharge its mandate.

9. The Committee has taken a consistent interest in the question of the reform of the United Nations gender equality architecture. It regularly discusses issues of common concern with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The Chair of the Committee met with the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women on 4 March 2013 to discuss ways of further strengthening the cooperation between the two entities. The Committee is currently collaborating with UN-Women on several of its draft general recommendations, and UN-Women regularly invites experts from the Committee to participate in expert group meetings and side events convened in conjunction with intergovernmental processes.

10. The Committee has continued to interact with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Deputy High Commissioner and other senior staff, and has welcomed opportunities for discussion with relevant divisions, branches and sections on issues relevant to the work of the Committee.

11. The Committee meets regularly with special procedures mandate holders, including, during the reporting period, the Chair and another member of the Working Group on Discrimination against Women in Law and Practice and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

12. On 18 October 2012, the Committee commemorated its thirtieth anniversary. The event, organized by OHCHR and the International Organization of la Francophonie and attended by more than 130 representatives from States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations, provided an opportunity for the Committee to interact with speakers, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, and the independent expert on the

situation of human rights in Haiti. The panels focused on the human rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations in French-speaking Africa.

13. The Committee continued to contribute actively to the work of the human rights treaty bodies, especially within the framework of the annual meetings of chairs of treaty bodies. The Chair participated in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth meetings of chairs of human rights treaty bodies, which were convened from 25 to 29 June 2012 and from 20 to 24 May 2013 in Addis Ababa and New York, respectively. During the twenty-fourth meeting of chairs of human rights treaty bodies, the Chair of the Committee participated in a dialogue with representatives of African human rights mechanisms, including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the East African Court of Justice and the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States. During the twenty-fifth meeting of chairs, the Chair of the Committee actively engaged in the adoption of a joint statement on the post-2015 development agenda and in discussions with Member States, including regional groups, on the strengthening of the treaty body system.

14. Committee members participated in panel discussions held during sessions of the Human Rights Council, and one member participated in a day of general discussion of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee's working group on the joint general comment/recommendation on harmful practices met with the respective working group of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to discuss the draft joint general comment/recommendation on harmful practices. Committee members also participated in various panel discussions organized by other stakeholders.

15. During the reporting period, the Committee held two general discussions, one on women in conflict and post-conflict situations, on 18 July 2011, and the other on women and access to justice, on 18 February 2013. Both general discussions were organized as the first phase in the elaboration of general recommendations. The general discussion on women in conflict and post-conflict situations was attended by close to 300 persons and included as speakers the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, OHCHR; the Assistant Secretary-General for Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships, UN-Women; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and the Coordinator of the High-level Panel on Remedies and Reparations for Victims of Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The general discussion on women and access to justice, organized under the joint OHCHR/UN-Women/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) programme on access to justice, included as speakers the Vice-Chair of the working group on discrimination against women in law and practice, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, the Vice-Chair of the working group on arbitrary detention, and the Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists.

16. With a view to further enhancing and harmonizing its working methods with other treaty bodies, the Committee decided to transform its task force on working methods into a working group. The Committee met with the Human Rights

Committee to discuss working methods, including the list of issues prior to reporting procedure applied by the Human Rights Committee, as well as follow-up to concluding observations. It decided to establish a joint working group with the Human Rights Committee for future cooperation. The Committee continued to discuss the proposals contained in the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the strengthening of the human rights treaty bodies (A/66/860) and adopted a statement welcoming the efforts of the High Commissioner to overcome the difficulties the treaty body system is facing. It also decided to incorporate in its rules of procedure the guidelines on independence and impartiality of human rights treaty body members endorsed at the twenty-fourth meeting of the chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, held in Addis Ababa in June 2012 ("the Addis Ababa guidelines"; see A/67/222, annex I).

B. Evaluation by the Committee

17. As at 1 July 2013, there are 15 States parties with long-overdue reports (more than 5 years overdue). Two of the States parties that have not yet submitted their long-overdue reports, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Senegal, have been scheduled to be considered by the Committee in the absence of their reports. Four States parties that have not yet submitted their long-overdue reports, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago, were asked to submit them by a certain date in 2014 or 2015, failing which they would also be scheduled to be considered in the absence of a report. The Committee also continues to send reminders to States parties with overdue reports. It continues to schedule the reports of 24 States parties for review each year and has scheduled 32 States parties to be considered at its fifty-sixth session (September/October 2013), fifty-seventh session (February 2014), fifty-eighth session (June/July 2014) and fifty-ninth session (October 2014). Nine reports have not yet been formally scheduled. The Committee is aware that it has a slight backlog and is discussing ways to address it. The consideration of combined reports assists greatly in keeping the backlog in check. Most reports submitted consist of combined reports.

18. The Committee is gratified that it continues to attract a wide following within the United Nations system and civil society, including national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, and that it has been able to interact with the wider human rights framework, including the Human Rights Council, the special procedures mandate holders and other treaty bodies. Its transfer to OHCHR and the holding of sessions in Geneva have enabled the Committee to interact regularly with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to develop close relationships with Geneva-based United Nations entities and other bodies, such as IPU.

19. The Committee considers that it has made strong efforts to harmonize its practices with those of other treaty bodies. It was one of the first treaty bodies to limit the number of questions in lists of issues and the number of recommendations in concluding observations and to align the methodology for its constructive dialogue with States parties by using country task forces and rapporteurs, focusing questions during the dialogue on the most important human rights issues and on a State party's follow-up to the previous concluding observations and allocating equitable speaking time to treaty body members and to the State party delegation. The Committee also

considers that its follow-up procedure, which is based on that of other treaty bodies, has strengthened implementation at the national level.

Fulfilment by States parties of reporting obligations

20. Article 18, paragraph 1, of the Convention provides that States parties undertake to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention within one year after its entry into force for the State concerned and thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests.

21. Between 2 July 2011 and 1 July 2013, the Secretary-General received the reports (many of which are combined reports) from the following States parties: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Comoros, Denmark, Ecuador, Eritrea, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mauritania, Peru, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tuvalu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

22. During the reporting period, the Committee held the following six sessions: forty-ninth session, from 11 to 29 July 2011; fiftieth session, from 3 to 21 October 2011; fifty-first session, from 13 February to 2 March 2012; fifty-second session, from 9 to 27 July 2012; fifty-third session, from 1 to 19 October 2012; and fifty-fourth session, from 11 February to 1 March 2013. During those sessions, the Committee considered the reports of 43 States parties. The fifty-fifth session will be held from 8 to 26 July 2013, at which an additional eight reports will be considered by the Committee.

Reports awaiting consideration, overdue reports and requests for follow-up reports

23. A total of 48 reports submitted by States parties have yet to be considered by the Committee, 38 of which have been scheduled to be considered at upcoming sessions of the Committee through the end of 2014. Ten reports received have not yet been formally scheduled.

24. In the light of the reduced backlog of reports awaiting consideration, the Committee initiated a systematic effort to encourage States parties to submit long-overdue reports. On the basis of its decisions 29/I and 31/III (i), it established that it would proceed with consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the absence of a report only as a last resort and in the presence of a delegation. The Committee continued its practice of inviting States parties with long-overdue reports to submit all their overdue reports as a combined report.

25. Currently, the following States parties have not yet submitted their initial reports: Dominica, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, San Marino and Sao Tome and Principe.

26. Reports that were due in June 2008 or before include: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ireland, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, and Trinidad and Tobago.

27. Reports that were due between July 2008 and June 2013 include those for: Croatia, Estonia, Honduras, Latvia, Malaysia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Philippines, Romania and Vanuatu.

C. Working methods of the Committee

28. Taking into account that the General Assembly is striving to limit the length of documentation, the Committee's report no longer includes the concluding observations on the reports of States parties or the decisions on communications; those are published as separate documents and are posted on the OHCHR website.

29. The Committee has continued to convene its pre-session working group two sessions in advance of the consideration of a report to ensure that States parties have enough time to respond to their respective lists of issues and questions

30. The Committee, in the last paragraph of its concluding observations, establishes the due date for the State party's next periodic report. In cases where the next periodic report is overdue or becomes due within a year of the date of consideration, the Committee requests the State party to submit its next report as a combined periodic report. Most reports considered by the Committee are now combined reports.

31. During the reporting period, the Committee focused on ensuring that the concluding observations on the reports of States parties were more user-friendly, concrete and precise, so that they could be implemented more easily at the national level. It should be recalled that at its forty-first session, the Committee decided to adopt the practice of inserting titles (subject headings) in its concluding observations, and agreed on a list of titles which would be applied flexibly and as appropriate for the State party concerned (A/63/38, part two, annex X). At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee decided to shorten and merge several standard paragraphs contained in its concluding observations.

32. At its forty-first session, the Committee decided to introduce a follow-up procedure whereby it would include a request to individual States parties in the concluding observations for information on steps taken to implement specific recommendations. At its forty-fourth session, the Committee decided to appoint a rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and an alternate. It is noted that a maximum of two recommendations are identified for follow-up. The criteria for the selection of follow-up recommendations are that the concerns addressed in those recommendations constitute a major obstacle to women's enjoyment of their rights and thus to the implementation of the Convention as a whole and that their implementation would be feasible within the suggested time frame. The follow-up report is also made public and is available on the website of OHCHR. The follow-up rapporteur collaborates with the country rapporteur on the assessment of the follow-up report. The rapporteur reports to the Committee at each session, and that report is included in the Committee's report to the General Assembly. At its forty-seventh session, the Committee decided to include follow-up to concluding observations as a standing item on the agenda. At its fiftieth session, the Committee appointed a new rapporteur on follow-up as well as an alternate, each for a two-year term. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee updated its methodology on the follow-up procedure to concluding observations and adopted an information note on the

follow-up procedure for different stakeholders (see A/68/38, part three, annex III and appendix).

33. The Committee continued its interaction with the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system that contribute to its work and support the full implementation of the Convention at the national level. It continued to benefit from joint information submitted on States parties under consideration by United Nations country teams, and encouraged the entities of the United Nations system to undertake follow-up activities on the basis of the Committee's concluding observations at the country level.

34. The Committee continued its practice of meeting informally with non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions wishing to present country-specific information on States parties whose reports were before it, at the beginning of the first and second weeks of the session. The Committee's pre-session working group also provided opportunities for non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions to present written and oral information. General and session-specific information notes for non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions are regularly posted on the OHCHR website.

35. The Committee continued to emphasize the important role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the Convention and the follow-up to concluding observations and includes a standard paragraph on the role of parliaments in each observation. IPU regularly submits information on the representation of women in the parliaments of the States parties under consideration and organizes regular capacity-building sessions for parliamentarians on the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

36. The Committee continued its practice of adopting statements on particular events or developments. Those include statements on the anniversaries of the adoption of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and on rural women, adopted at its fiftieth session (A/67/38, part two, annexes I and II, respectively); statements on the need for a gender perspective in the text of the Arms Trade Treaty and on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, adopted at its fifty-second session (A/68/38, part one, annexes I and VII, respectively); statements on protection of the right of girls to education and on the situation of women and girls in northern Mali, adopted at its fifty-third session (A/68/38, part two, annexes I and II, respectively); and a statement on the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the strengthening of the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, adopted at its fifty-fourth session (A/68/38, part three, annex VII).

37. The Committee adopted at its fifty-fourth session a general recommendation on article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution) (ibid., annex I). The joint general comment/recommendation on harmful practices and the general recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations are in the process of being finalized. With respect to the general recommendation on access to justice, an outline and a first draft are currently being prepared. In relation to the general recommendation on asylum, statelessness and natural disasters, the Committee decided to separate the issue of asylum and statelessness from the issue of natural disasters and climate change and

to draft two individual general recommendations (see A/68/38, part one, annex V). A first draft of a general recommendation on gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum and statelessness has been prepared. The Committee also decided to elaborate general recommendations on rural women and on the right to education at its fiftieth and fifty-second sessions, respectively.

D. Working methods with regard to the Optional Protocol

38. During the reporting period, the Committee continued to carry out its activities under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Committee normally allocates one meeting per session to matters relating to the Optional Protocol for consideration in plenary meeting.

39. The Committee's Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol held six sessions during the reporting period. The Working Group on Communications convenes three times a year for a total of 10 working days. To date, the Working Group has registered 54 communications, 22 of which were registered during the reporting period. Out of the 54 communications, 23 remain open.

40. During the reporting period, the Committee adopted final decisions with regard to 13 communications. At its forty-ninth session, held in July 2011, the Committee discontinued its consideration of one communication concerning Italy at the author's request and adopted views on communications No. 17/2008, No. 20/2008 and No. 23/2009, finding violations in each case. At its fiftieth session, held in October 2011, the Committee adopted views on communication No. 22/2009, finding a violation, and declared communications No. 26/2010 and No. 27/2010 inadmissible. At its fifty-first session, held in February/March 2012, the Committee adopted views finding violations in relation to communications No. 19/2008 and No. 28/2008, and declared communication No. 25/2010 inadmissible. At its fifty-second session, held in July 2012, the Committee adopted views finding a violation in relation to communication No. 32/2011. At its fifty-third session, held in October 2012, the Committee adopted views on communication No. 31/2011, finding a violation, and declared communication No. 38/2012 inadmissible. The Committee did not consider any communications during its fifty-fourth session, held in February/March 2013. During the reporting period, the Committee and its Working Group on Communications continued to examine information, under its procedure on follow-up to views, in relation to nine views concerning seven States parties: Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Peru, Philippines and Turkey. During the fifty-third session, the Chair of the Working Group on Communications and other Committee members discussed follow-up matters with representatives of the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations Office at Geneva, including measures taken by the State party to give effect to the Committee's views on communication No. 22/2009. During the reporting period, four submissions under article 8 of the Optional Protocol requesting inquiries were received by the Committee and registered by the Secretariat pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee. There are currently two inquiries pending with the Committee.

IV. Efforts to encourage universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, and acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

41. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women continue to encourage universal ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol and promote acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which stipulates the meeting time allocated to the Committee. They have encouraged related action in their meetings with delegations, in statements and presentations at United Nations Headquarters, at other duty stations, and at conferences and other forums.

V. Technical assistance provided to States parties

42. Technical assistance and capacity-building activities of OHCHR routinely focus on the Convention, including with respect to the preparation of reports and follow-up to concluding observations, as well as the mechanisms established under the Optional Protocol. During the reporting period, UN-Women continued to organize training seminars on the Convention in a number of countries, which benefited from the contributions of experts of the Committee and involved not only Government officials but also other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations. Capacity-building is considered to be vital to assist States parties in the implementation of their treaty obligations. OHCHR could do more in that regard but is prevented from doing so by budgetary constraints.

VI. Dissemination of the Convention, its Optional Protocol and information on the work of the Committee

43. OHCHR maintains a page on the Convention and its Optional Protocol and the work of the Committee on its website. The text of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, reports of States parties, lists of issues and questions, responses from States parties, States parties' introductory statements and the composition of delegations presenting reports, the Committee's concluding observations and documents and any other information concerning the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the working methods of the Committee and the meetings of States parties are posted on the website. The Universal Human Rights Index, the electronic research tool maintained by OHCHR that indexes concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies and recommendations of special procedures mandate holders, includes all lists of issues and concluding observations of the Committee.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

44. The Committee has made significant efforts to reduce the delay between the submission of reports and their consideration, using efficient working methods, including time management, which it adjusts on the basis of experience. Its efforts to encourage States parties to comply with their reporting obligations, especially where reports are long overdue, have been successful. It has enhanced its interaction

with stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention and has actively contributed to the common efforts of all treaty bodies to harmonize and strengthen the human rights treaty body system, while adopting innovations appropriate to its work. The Committee has continued to develop its jurisprudence through its work under the Optional Protocol, and its follow-up procedure under this instrument has yielded positive results. It has adopted one general recommendation, and two draft general recommendations are nearing completion. The Committee organized two days of general discussion during the reporting period and has decided to elaborate additional general recommendations. A day of general discussion is being organized for one such general recommendation during the fifty-sixth session. The Committee has made its concluding observations more focused, relevant and user-friendly. Follow-up to concluding observations has been mostly successful, although additional resources are required on the part of the Committee and the States concerned. Despite the Committee's achievements, it must make greater efforts to encourage the implementation of the Convention at the national level.

United Nations A/68/122

General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 July 2013

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Item 139 of the preliminary list*
Pattern of conferences

Pattern of conferences

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report responds to requests made pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/237 of 24 December 2012 and other relevant mandates on issues related to conference management, as well as on initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat to improve the quality of conference services provided to Member States. The detailed information on the paper-smart concept requested in section IV, paragraph 21, of the above resolution is the subject of a separate report (A/68/123). Statistical data are provided as supplementary information and can be accessed at the link below,[a] or on the website of the Committee on Conferences.[b]

[a] http://coc.dgacm.org/2013/Documents/2013_Supplementary_Information.pdf.
[b] http://coc.dgacm.org.

* A/68/50.

13-38556 (E) 190713

Please recycle

I. Meetings management

A. Calendar of conferences and meetings

1. Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985

1. Requests to meet during the main part of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly have been received from the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (see supplementary information,[1] sect. I). In accordance with established practice, the requests will be reviewed by the Committee on Conferences for recommendation to the General Assembly.

2. Draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2014-2015

2. The provisional calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields for 2014 and 2015 (E/2013/L.6) was reviewed by the Committee on Conferences on 2 July 2013, and its comments have been transmitted to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2013 (E/2013/93).

3. During its substantive session, in September 2013, the Committee on Conferences will review the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2014-2015 (A/AC.172/2013/L.2) and transmit its recommendations to the General Assembly in its report for 2013 (A/68/32, annexes I and II).

3. Intersessional departures for 2013

4. The Committee on Conferences approved a request from the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters to change the venue of its sixtieth session in June 2013 from New York to Geneva.

5. The Committee also approved a request from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to extend by three days its session in December 2013.

B. Utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

1. Analysis of meeting statistics of United Nations organs

6. Statistical data by body for the past three years on the utilization of conference resources allocated to a core sample of bodies that met in New York, Geneva,

[1] See http://coc.dgacm.org/2013/Documents/2013_Supplementary_Information.pdf.

Vienna and Nairobi is contained in section II, table 1, of the supplementary information. Statistics relating to documents are presented separately in section VII of the supplementary information.

7. The utilization factor by duty station for the past three years is contained in section II, table 2, of the supplementary information. The overall utilization factor for meetings at all four duty stations in 2012 is 84 per cent, which is above the established benchmark of 80 per cent. There was a decrease of 1 percentage point from 85 per cent in 2011, mainly owing to a 3 per cent decrease in the utilization factor of the core sample of bodies in New York from 82 per cent in 2011 to 79 per cent in 2012. The percentage of cancelled meetings increased to 8 per cent in 2012 from 6 per cent in 2011, and the time lost as a result of late starts and early endings slightly increased to 16 per cent in 2012 compared to 15 per cent in 2011. However, the reassignment of cancelled meetings enabled the provision of interpretation services to accommodate a larger volume of requests from bodies entitled to meet on an "as required" basis (664 in 2012 as compared to 553 in 2011) as well as from regional groups (95 per cent in 2012 as compared to 92 per cent in 2011).

8. Both the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Nairobi recorded an increase in the utilization factor from 90 per cent in 2011 to 93 per cent in 2012 and from 89 per cent in 2011 to 92 per cent in 2012, respectively. The utilization factor for meetings held at the United Nations Office at Vienna remained at 89 per cent, the same in 2012 as in 2011.

9. In 2012, the utilization factor of the following three intergovernmental bodies in New York fell below the benchmark of 80 per cent for the previous three consecutive years (see supplementary information, sect. II, table 1.A): the Committee on Information, the Committee on Contributions and the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund. As mandated by the General Assembly, the Chair of the Committee on Conferences will hold consultations with the bureaux and secretariats of those bodies and will report orally to the Committee at its substantive session. The Statistical Commission and the Commission for Social Development, which had previously not fully utilized their entitlement, improved in 2012, reaching 86 per cent and 81 per cent, respectively.

10. In 2012, there were no bodies in the core sample at the Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi duty stations whose utilization factor fell below the benchmark. At Geneva, the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which had previously not fully utilized its entitlement, made notable improvement in 2012, reaching a utilization factor of 84 per cent.

11. Pursuant to section II.A, paragraph 20, of General Assembly resolution 67/237 of 24 December 2012, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (hereinafter referred to as the Department) has continued to work closely with the secretariats and bureaux of the six intergovernmental bodies whose average utilization factor for the past 10 years had fallen below the benchmark of 80 per cent as at July 2012 (see sect. II, table 8, of the supplementary information provided in the context of the previous report on the pattern of conferences, A/67/127).[2] Following close cooperation and coordination with the Department, two of those bodies, based in New York, namely, the Statistical Commission and the

[2] http://dgacm.org/CoC/Report_of_the_SG_on_the_pattern_of_conferences_(A-67-127)_Supplementary_information.pdf.

Commission for Social Development, improved their utilization factor in 2012, as mentioned in paragraph 9 above. Since their average utilization factor for the past 10 years is still below the benchmark, they are listed in section II, table 9, of the supplementary information together with eight other intergovernmental bodies that fall into that category. Of the remaining eight intergovernmental bodies listed in table 9, the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, a Geneva-based body, improved its utilization factor in 2012, as mentioned in paragraph 10 above, following close interaction and cooperation with the Division of Conference Management of the United Nations Office at Geneva, although its average utilization factor over 10 years remains below the 80 per cent benchmark. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the Commission on Population and Development have maintained a utilization factor above the benchmark for the past three years.

12. Section II, table 10, of the supplementary information gives detailed statistics on the five intergovernmental bodies whose average utilization factor for the past 10 years remains below the benchmark of 80 per cent, and for which no improvement is noted in 2012. The list includes the Committee on Information and the Committee on Contributions, whose utilization factor fell below 80 per cent for the past three consecutive years, as mentioned in paragraph 9 above. **Based on a thorough review of the pattern of meetings for the past 10 years of each of the five bodies, the Department has made specific suggestions to the substantive and technical secretariats of those bodies, urging them to base their requests for planned meetings on actual utilization so as to minimize cancellations, to notify the Department in a timely manner in case of cancellation and to make full use of the meeting times.**

13. Meetings services reports, providing statistical data on the utilization factor for the past three years, including suggestions for improvement whenever necessary, continue to be sent out to the presiding officers of the secretariats of intergovernmental bodies prior to the start of their scheduled sessions. The Secretariat actively seeks feedback in order to assist the bodies in improving their utilization factor.

14. The planning accuracy factor[3] at the four duty stations decreased by 2 per cent to 86 per cent in 2012 from 88 per cent in 2011 and 2010 (see supplementary information, sect. II, table 6). In New York, the planning accuracy factor decreased by 4 per cent to 79 per cent in 2012 from 83 per cent in 2011. Two factors have adversely affected the index, namely, an increase of 1 per cent in the ratio of meetings added to meetings programmed and an increase of 3 per cent in the ratio of cancelled to programmed meetings.

15. At the United Nations Office at Geneva, the planning accuracy factor remained at 96 per cent, as in 2010 and 2011. At the United Nations Office at Vienna, the planning accuracy factor decreased slightly to 98 per cent in 2012 from 99 per cent in 2011. At the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the planning accuracy factor increased to 100 per cent in 2012 from 93 per cent in 2011.

[3] Number of meetings actually held as a percentage of the number of planned meetings adjusted one week before the session.

16. Although the meetings ratio[4] in 2012 dropped to 87 per cent from 89 per cent in 2011 for the core sample of bodies meeting in New York (see supplementary information, sect. II, table 4), the overall ratio of all meetings held in New York increased to 89 per cent in 2012 from 88 per cent in 2011 (see supplementary information, sect. II, table 8).

17. Data on meetings programmed[5] and held at the four duty stations (including the core sample) are shown in section II, table 8, of the supplementary information. The percentage of meetings programmed compared with meetings held for all meetings with interpretation in New York increased to 98 per cent in 2012 from 95 per cent in 2011 (see supplementary information, sect. II, table 8). The significant decrease to 61 per cent in 2012 from 99 per cent in 2011 for meetings with interpretation experienced at the United Nations Office at Nairobi is attributed to the renovation of the meeting rooms between May and September 2012.

2. Provision of interpretation services to meetings of bodies entitled to meet "as required"

18. The number of requests accommodated for the provision of interpretation services to meetings of bodies entitled to meet "as required" in New York has sharply increased: 687 requested and 664 provided in 2012; 577 requested and 553 provided in 2011; and 392 requested and 370 provided in 2010. These statistics translate into a slight increase in the percentage of services provided (97 per cent in 2012 as compared to 96 per cent in 2011 and 94 per cent in 2010). Geneva maintained its 100 per cent record in the provision of interpretation services in 2012, as in 2010 and 2011 (see supplementary information, sect. III, table 2).

3. Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

19. Section IV of the supplementary information provides a breakdown on the provision of conference services by regional and other major groupings of Member States at the four duty stations for 2012. In New York, 95 per cent of the requests were met in 2012 (92 per cent in 2011). In Geneva, 86 per cent of the requests were met in 2012 (89 per cent in 2011), in spite of the heavy demand for additional meetings mandated by the human rights treaty bodies. At the United Nations Offices at Vienna and Nairobi 100 per cent of the requests for meetings with and without interpretation were met in 2012.

4. Utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

20. In 2012, all meetings of Nairobi-based bodies were held in Nairobi, in conformity with the headquarters rule, including the twelfth special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the quarterly Committees of Permanent Representatives to UNEP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). In addition, the Division of Conference Services of the United Nations Office at Nairobi was able to accommodate the request for interpretation services for two extraordinary meetings of the Committees of Permanent Representatives to UNEP and UN-Habitat.

---

[4] Number of meetings actually held as a percentage of a body's entitlement.

[5] Meetings confirmed in the weekly meetings programme as receiving services.

5. Utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa

21. The General Assembly has repeatedly noted with concern the recurring underutilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and has called for special measures to increase its utilization. The Secretariat has taken note of the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/67/523, paras. 6 and 7) and Assembly resolution 67/237, sect. II.A, paras. 14-17), and has undertaken several activities in response to the requests from the Assembly. In 2012, with its continuing marketing efforts, the conference centre at ECA hosted and serviced 4,354 meetings, which represented a decrease of only 8 per cent as compared to 2011, despite increasingly fierce competition from the hotels and other conference facilities in Addis Ababa.

22. The Department has communicated the concerns of Member States to the heads of entities of the United Nations system through CEB. In addition, the Executive Secretary of ECA has appealed to the United Nations country team to consider the conference centre at ECA as the first option for its meetings, conferences, seminars and workshops in Ethiopia. A similar plea will be made to the diplomatic community and development partners working in Ethiopia.

23. The Department facilitated the holding of the United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine at ECA on 29 and 30 April 2013. In accordance with the proximity rule for servicing meetings away from their established headquarters in the most cost-effective manner, the meeting was serviced by a mixed team of United Nations Office at Nairobi staff, freelancers and local staff.

24. A comprehensive analysis and review of the pricing structure is being conducted taking into account all value added services, for example, high-quality printing and documentation services and event management software to be provided by the conference centre. The objective is to introduce competitive conference packages that simplify the logistics of organizing venues, accommodation and other pertinent needs and requirements of conference and meeting planners.

25. In addition, ECA is developing a proactive marketing strategy that is sustainable, adequately funded and innovative in order to address the declining utilization of the conference centre. The strategy takes into account the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the feasibility study and proposed marketing strategy on maximizing the utilization of the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, which was commissioned in 2008.

26. The marketing strategy comprises five key components:

(a) Working collaboratively with the Addis Ababa Bureau of Culture and Tourism and key stakeholders to promote Addis Ababa as a meeting, incentive, convention and exhibition hub, with a view to engaging in joint marketing activities and developing add-on airline, accommodation and recreational packages;

(b) Building and strengthening partnerships with conference and event organizers through participation in high-profile international conventions and exhibitions such as the Worldwide Exhibition for Incentive Travel, Meetings and Events and the International Congress and Convention Association;

(c) Engaging in innovative marketing efforts, including revamping the conference centre website, incorporating multiple languages and virtual tours, producing high-quality promotional materials in English, French and Arabic,

including e-mail marketing-automated e-mail systems to increase buying decisions from clients and to encourage repeat bookings, establishing a dedicated blog and embracing other social media marketing concepts;

(d) Expanding the outreach activities to target new markets where prospective conference users have been identified, for example, the growing public and private sectors in Ethiopia and their key trading partners in Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe;

(e) Focusing marketing efforts on attracting larger conferences that require more specialized services and logistical support in which the conference centre would have a competitive advantage in the Ethiopian market, including partnering with other conference centres for referrals.

27. The provision of quality services is critical to attracting and maintaining clients. To that end, the conference centre is continuously improving its facilities with the aim of being accredited as an international conference facility. Some of the ongoing projects include kitchen renovations, refurbishing of some of the meeting rooms, and the upgrading of interpretation booths.

C. Impact of the implementation of the capital master plan on meetings held at Headquarters

28. The Department regularly communicated with the administration of the capital master plan and with focal points in all critical areas on issues concerning the planning, scheduling and implementation of activities during the completion phases of the plan. In accordance with the restacking plan, staff have been relocated to the Secretariat Building and the Albano Building. While conference rooms are still operating in the North Lawn Building, newly renovated rooms are being reopened in the Conference Building. Since the end of May, the General Assembly Hall has been closed for the final phase of the plan. An updated chart showing the availability of conference rooms during the remaining phases of the capital master plan is contained in section V of the supplementary information.

II. Integrated global management

A. Status report

29. Key personnel changes in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the offices away from Headquarters have delayed the process of consultation to operationalize and codify the dual responsibility for conference management between the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Directors General of the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. There is recognition that technology makes it possible, and that financial constraints make it necessary, to define with precision the authority of the various players with regard to resource utilization, capacity planning and workload sharing. Since documents no longer need to be processed in situ for operational reasons, the four duty stations covered by section 2 of the regular budget are increasingly acting as one coherent, integrated whole, leveraging economies of scale and available

computer-assisted translation technologies to achieve consistently high-quality and timely output regardless of the geographic location of the requesting body or the workforce. These developments underline the urgency of clearly delineating lines of responsibility between the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Directors General of the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi for conference management policies, operations and resource utilization.

30. The Department's New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi duty stations cooperated in building the common technological platform for translation and related functions. However, in order to optimize the servicing of various meetings away from Headquarters and align working methods, policies and practices related to the servicing of meetings and the production of multilingual documentation, further progress must be made in integrated global management. The current business model of four separate production chains must be integrated into a coherent and complementary global operation at all four duty stations, including a global capacity for external translation. This goal requires strategic rethinking and the codification of the dual responsibility referred to above. The related changes will be discussed with all concerned at the four duty stations and in other Secretariat departments with a view to reporting results to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session.

31. The proximity rule is a shorthand for the cumulative efforts by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management duty stations to achieve the most efficient servicing package for meetings held away from their designated headquarters. It includes but is not limited to minimizing travel costs. For example, whenever possible, functions are combined through multitasking without negatively affecting the services. For some recurring meetings, reduced staffing has become the norm, and savings from those reductions have already been reported. In 2012, the savings accrued for host Governments and in the regular budget as a result of applying the proximity rule total about $800,000.

32. Staff members who have participated in jointly serviced meetings have recognized that they have very positive non-financial advantages, such as developing and strengthening a system-wide common approach to the servicing of meetings and the sharing of good practices (such as paper-smart meetings at UNEP) among colleagues and counterparts from various duty stations.

B. Performance measurement

33. In support of integrated global management initiatives, and in response to the recommendations of Member States, the Department has established common performance indicators for conference services in the four duty stations and now uses them in the gData global reporting warehouse. In accordance with the Umoja technology standards, the Department acquired and implemented the SAP BusinessObjects software for business intelligence and reporting needs of the gData system.

34. It is expected that the development of the gDoc global document management system will be completed in 2013 and its deployment in all the duty stations in the biennium 2014-2015. Application development is being conducted at the United

Nations Office at Geneva, with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management coordinating the project.

35. Another global project (gText) was launched in January 2013, with the aim of supporting the document production tasks by building a system that includes e-Referencing, global terminology and computer-assisted and machine-translation features. It is expected that gText will be implemented in the four duty stations in 2014-2015.

36. Upon the request of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Office of Human Resources Management reviewed the time and attendance Flextime system deployed in the Department since 2010. The objective of the review was to provide an assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the system and to determine its continued use as the primary tool for recording and processing attendance and leave in the Department through an interface with the Integrated Management Information System. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management advised that the report concluded by recommending the continuation of the Flextime system in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management "as the primary tool for recording and processing subject to consideration and implementation of 25 recommendations contained therein".[6] The core findings of the report were that:

(a) The management of the Department was well within its delegated authority in introducing and implementing the system;

(b) The introduction of the system involved simply the transfer of a manual process to an electronic platform;

(c) The senior management of the Department and the various staff representatives had met their obligations with respect to holding consultations on the introduction of the system;

(d) The language staff were not exempt from observing established working hours.

37. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management has implemented or will implement all of the recommendations addressed to it, while others are under consideration elsewhere in the Secretariat, especially the recommendation that the pilot phase of the system be expanded to include other departments and offices of the Secretariat in New York and elsewhere, on a voluntary basis.

C. Evaluation by Member States of the quality of conference services

38. The global e-survey, redesigned in 2012 to capture feedback from Member States across the four duty stations, employed common indicators of the satisfaction of the respondents. The survey was launched at the four duty stations through extensive outreach and focused promotional activities in a multilingual format in December 2012 and was made available until the end of February 2013. In addition to indicating the ratings of services currently provided, the survey solicited feedback on improving the quality of services provided. Comments and complaints are

[6] The report is available from the Secretariat upon request.

collected and distributed to the relevant offices. Lessons learned are analysed to address areas requiring improvement, as identified by Member States (see supplementary information, sect. VI).

39. The survey was accessed 9,418 times. Regrettably, the response rate remained low. A letter was sent in February 2013 by the Acting Head of the Department to permanent missions advising them of the availability of the survey online. Despite those efforts, only 173 responses were received at all the duty stations. An analysis of the responses showed that a majority of the respondents from New York, Geneva and Vienna rated professionalism and courtesy of meeting services assistants, as "excellent". The overall linguistic quality of translated documents was rated "excellent" by respondents from New York and Geneva. Respondents in New York rated the overall quality of conference services as "good". The majority of respondents in New York rated as "excellent" the work of the Secretaries of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly and the Committee on Conferences, as well as the work of their teams in supporting the Committees in their preparations for and during their sessions. Complaints were received from six delegations.

40. A new section of the survey related to the demand for e-services. Strong trends emerged in the area of circulation of statements. Ninety-two of the respondents submitted statements for the general debate electronically. Two thirds of the respondents preferred electronic, non-hard copy distribution of documents, while one third expressed a preference for hard copy in some cases and for electronic form in others. Eighty-three per cent of the respondents preferred to use their own personal devices in the meeting rooms.

41. In 2012, the Department held language-specific informational meetings with Member States on the quality of language services at Headquarters from 10 to 12 April and from 16 to 18 October; the Division of Conference Management of the United Nations Office at Geneva conducted one informational meeting per language, from 30 May to 1 June (one half-day for each official language); the Conference Management Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna conducted one informational meeting in September; and the Division of Conference Services of the United Nations Office at Nairobi held an informational meeting in April.

42. A consolidated summary of the opinions expressed by delegations and the responses provided by the Secretariat during the language-specific informational meetings with Member States held from 16 to 18 October is posted on the Department's website[7] pursuant to a request of the General Assembly as a novel way of engaging Member States on language-related issues and addressing their concerns.

43. In addition to the survey, the Department maintains a database and will set up a suggestion box to capture ad hoc feedback on the quality of its services from Member States.

[7] www.un.org/depts/DGACM/.

III. Matters related to documentation and publications

A. Documents management

44. During the reporting cycle, further progress was achieved globally in the area of proactive document management. In 2012, the overall timely submission rate was 88 per cent at United Nations Headquarters (1,033 out of 1,168), 85 per cent at the United Nations Office at Geneva (1,545 out of 1,813), 60 per cent at the United Nations Office at Vienna (80 out of 134) and 5 per cent at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (1 out of 19). In 2012, the rate of author departments and offices meeting the 90 per cent timely submission benchmark[8] was 60 per cent (29 out of 48) at United Nations Headquarters, 43 per cent (3 out of 7) at Geneva and zero per cent at both Vienna (zero out of 3) and Nairobi (zero out of 1).

45. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management pays close attention and gives high priority to the documents of the Fifth Committee. For the main part of the Fifth Committee's deliberations during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, 44 out of 75 documents planned, or 59 per cent, were submitted in a timely manner. Twenty-two documents were issued as mandated, namely, six weeks before their consideration; 11 documents were issued at least four weeks, and 18 at least two weeks, before being considered. The remaining 26 documents were issued less than two weeks before the respective meeting because of a combination of late slotting and other reasons beyond the control of the Secretariat, their excessive length and late submission.

46. For its first resumed session in 2013, the Fifth Committee considered 13 documents, of which 10 were submitted for processing in a timely manner (77 per cent). One document was issued at least six weeks before the respective meeting; four documents were issued at least four weeks, and four documents at least two weeks, before the respective meetings. Even though the remaining four documents were issued less than two weeks before the respective meetings, they were processed in 22 days on average, much less than the standard four weeks, despite their considerable length.

47. For the second part of the resumed session in 2013, the Fifth Committee considered 51 documents, of which 48 were slotted and 3 were submitted without the required pre-notification. Out of 48 slotted manuscripts, 44 (92 per cent) were submitted by authors to the Department in a timely manner. Thirty-two documents (67 per cent) were issued by the Department at least six weeks before the respective meetings; five were issued at least four weeks and five two weeks before the meeting. Owing to their length, the remaining six documents were issued less than two weeks before the meeting.

48. In 2012, the Department processed on time 97 per cent of manuscripts submitted on time and within established word limits (797 out of 821). Twenty-four manuscripts did not meet the processing benchmark, owing mainly to the competing priorities during peak seasons. As a result, 72 per cent of all pre-session documents

[8] The overall timely submission rate is defined as the percentage of manuscripts submitted to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management by author departments and offices before or on the agreed-upon slotting date. The 90 per cent benchmark was established by the Secretary-General and is contained in his annual compacts with all Heads of Department and Office.

issued in New York met the mandated timely issuance benchmarks. The Division of Conference Management of the United Nations Office at Geneva reported timely processing of 55 per cent and 28 per cent, respectively, for Secretariat and non-Secretariat reports, and the Conference Management Service of the United Nations Office at Vienna reported 44 per cent and 56 per cent, respectively, showing considerable improvement from 2011.

49. The Secretariat has posted on the sanctions committees' respective websites in the six official languages of the United Nations the lists of individuals and entities subject to Security Council sanctions in connection with Somalia/Eritrea, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Sudan, Libya, Guinea-Bissau and the Security Council Committees established pursuant to resolutions 1718 (2006) [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] and 1737 (2006) [Iran, Islamic Republic of].

50. Furthermore, in accordance with paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2082 (2012) of 17 December 2012 and paragraph 17 of resolution 2083 (2012) of the same date, the narrative summaries of reasons for the listing of all individuals and entities on the Al-Qaida Sanctions List and the 1988 (2011) Sanctions List are made publicly accessible in the six official languages on the Security Council's website. In total, 290 summaries have been posted for the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee and 135 for the 1988 (2011) Sanctions Committee, amounting to over 2,550 pages made available in the six official languages. Since the 2012 session of the Committee on Conferences, there has been a net decrease in the number of individuals and entities on the two above-mentioned lists. The lists remain active and names are continuously being added and removed.

B. Digitization of important older United Nations documents

51. The task of digitizing, processing and uploading to the Official Document System (ODS) of all important older United Nations documents, that is, parliamentary records of the Organization going back to 1946, is a continuing programme of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library of the Department of Public Information in collaboration with the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The processing is not only technical; metadata must be created for the documents.

52. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has completed the digitization of the General Assembly official records supplements of the first to forty-seventh sessions in English, French and Spanish, thus ensuring online access to the entire series. The Library at Geneva is completing the digitization of the same document series in Arabic, Chinese and Russian. In addition, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library has completed the digitizing and uploading of the verbatim records of General Assembly plenary meetings from the first to the eighteenth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth and twenty-ninth sessions, a total of 23 sessions. All other General Assembly parliamentary documents from the forty-second to forty-seventh sessions in English, French and Spanish have been digitized and are accessible on ODS. The Library at the United Nations Office at Geneva is digitizing additional official documents of the Conference on Disarmament, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, the Economic and Social

Council and the Commission on Human Rights in all available official languages. By early 2013, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library had digitized 257,000 documents (2,453,000 pages) and the Library at Geneva had digitized 83,000 documents (1,159,000 pages). All digitized parliamentary documents, including Security Council documents from 1946 to 1993, in all six official languages, are accessible online through ODS.

53. There remain an estimated 3.7 million important older documents to be digitized (representing about 20 per cent of an estimated 17 million older United Nations documents requiring to be digitized). At such rate of progress, the expected time frame for completing the digitization of important older documents in-house would be at least 20 years. According to the indicative estimate of the Department of Public Information, the project to process all of the remaining important documents issued prior to the creation of ODS (3.7 million) within five years would cost $9 million. The current inventory is not definitive, and document collections can also present unforeseen challenges in digitization.

54. The benefits of having a complete documentary record on ODS are clear: it would substantially enhance access to the United Nations parliamentary documentation, not only as a key resource for Member States and the Secretariat, but would also make it readily available to researchers, civil society and the general public, irrespective of location.

55. The Publishing Section at Headquarters possesses the expertise to digitize documents, including the scanning of bound volumes, which is a labour-intensive process. In May 2013, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Dag Hammarskjöld Library combined their resources to expand the digitizing programme in order to respond to the request of the General Assembly (resolution 67/237, sect. IV, paras. 23 and 24) to complete the task of uploading all important older documents onto the United Nations website in all six official languages. For that purpose, and in order to utilize the supernumerary capacity in the Publishing Section of the Department (see sect. C below), staff were assigned to scan such documents in preparation for their uploading.

C. Printing and distribution operations

56. The Department managed the transition from a hybrid (offset and digital) printing and binding operation to an entirely digital one, as outlined in annex I to the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 (A/66/6 (Sect. 2)). The current output of the Department's publishing operations is nearly 90 per cent less than in 2009, when over 300 million page impressions were produced. This reduction has enabled the Department to deploy leased digital printing equipment that is scalable, flexible and fully capable of meeting the current requirements of Member States for printed documents.

57. The leased digital equipment allowed printing services to be provided without interruption in the aftermath of storm Sandy, which, on 29 October 2012, resulted in extensive flooding of the publishing operations located on the third basement level of the North Lawn Building. The printing, binding and related equipment was damaged beyond repair and all the offices were rendered inaccessible. Under the lease contract, new digital printing equipment was made available at no cost to the

Organization. Those new machines were relocated so that printing and distribution services could be resumed within days.

IV. Matters related to translation and interpretation

58. Negotiations between organizations of the United Nations system and the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), chaired by the Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management, were conducted in 2011. They resulted in an agreement that came into force on 1 July 2012. The negotiations with the International Association of Conference Translators (AITC), chaired by the Coordinator of the Language Services of the World Health Organization, were conducted in 2012. They resulted in an agreement that entered into force on 1 January 2013. Both agreements are valid for five years and align the remuneration of short-term interpreters and translators with that of regular staff. Existing mechanisms, such as post adjustment multipliers and the United Nations official rate of exchange, are used to enhance predictability, transparency and ease of administration in all duty stations. Off-site translation is now formally regulated in the agreement with AITC as a practical, mutually beneficial processing method allowing the production of high-quality translations. Off-site translators are provided with the same terminological and reference tools as the in situ staff.

59. Following the review of the United Nations language competitive examinations in 2010, the Department and the Examinations and Tests Section of the Office of Human Resources Management agreed on a number of measures, including an 18-month rolling examination schedule, which have helped to meet the needs of individual language occupational groups for timely examinations in order to address both retirements and unpredictable separations.

60. As a matter of policy, the Department continues to comply with the principle of equal treatment of the six official languages. Encouraging language staff to continue to enhance their professional skills through targeted learning, together with a proactive outreach programme, remain the main succession-planning tools. In the period 2012/13, the programme continued to focus on the skill gaps identified by staff members themselves in consultation with their supervisors during their performance reviews. The external studies programme, coordinated for all four duty stations from New York, has become an effective component of integrated global management. Wherever possible, such external studies are combined with pedagogical assistance and other outreach activities at partner universities. This "competency-sharing" approach has proved to be a cost-effective way to achieve both training and outreach goals.

61. The Department continued and enhanced its collaboration with academic institutions within the framework of the outreach to universities programme. The third conference of universities that have signed memorandums of understanding with the United Nations, hosted in China by the Shanghai International Studies University in April 2013, provided an opportunity for all participants to further refine their common strategies in the training of language professionals. In support of greater cost-effectiveness of training, conference participants agreed to leverage more actively remote learning tools and exchanged good practices with leading international specialists in the field. The next conference will take place in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, in 2015.

62. The Department continued to facilitate the establishment and improvement of training programmes for interpreters and translators in Africa. For that purpose, the "African project" on the training of translators, conference interpreters and public service interpreters was initiated, aimed at creating a network of centres of excellence in Africa. The centres offer common master's degree programmes for the postgraduate training of language specialists, structured along the models of existing successful programmes. Following the first Pan-African Conference on the Training of Translators, Conference Interpreters and Public Service Interpreters, held in February 2009 in Nairobi in connection with the African project, master's degree pilot programmes were established at universities in Nairobi and Maputo, with pedagogical and technical assistance from the United Nations, the European Commission and the European Parliament. The staff of the United Nations Office at Nairobi offer approximately eight hours of translation and interpretation training a week to students of the University of Nairobi. The African project is coordinated by the Division of Conference Services at Nairobi; the University of Nairobi serves as a link between the Department's memorandum of understanding network and the African project.

63. The second Pan-African Conference on the Training of Translators, Conference Interpreters and Public Service Interpreters was held in Addis Ababa in May 2012. The participants discussed the role of trained language specialists in the promotion of multilingualism and their contribution to development efforts and conflict resolution on the continent; the importance of languages in developing countries for development, peace and stability; the challenges inherent in establishing a network of universities offering conference interpretation and translation training and the implementation of master's degree programmes in interpretation and translation; and the identification of reliable sources of funding for the development and sustainability of the African project.

64. Important recent developments in the process have been the adoption of a curriculum for interpretation and translation by the Pan African University, and the decision by a group of universities to constitute a network of centres of excellence in the five African regions for training young Africans as interpreters and translators. The Department continues to seek universities in Africa that would qualify for pedagogical assistance in training language professionals and that would benefit from such assistance.

65. The language internship programme in 2012 hosted 90 interns (New York Headquarters, 43; United Nations Office at Geneva, 32; United Nations Office at Vienna, 5; and United Nations Office at Nairobi, 10), and the United Nations Office at Vienna continued its traineeship programme with a total of 10 trainees given placements in the form of on-site retainer contracts. In 2012, language staff of the Department made about 45 visits to universities that had signed memorandums of understanding, mostly in conjunction with their own external studies or home leave, in order to meet with faculty and provide training to students, devoting a total of 213 person-days of pedagogical assistance to universities. At least 30 applicants have passed a language competitive examination since 2007 after benefiting from a language internship or traineeship, and about 110 former interns and trainees who passed a freelance test are now eligible for recruitment on temporary appointments.